

Gallops 2

David Gray





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Gallops

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“‘HERE IS LADY GAY,’ SHE SAID.”

Gallops 2

by
David Gray



New York
The Century Co.
1903

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TO
M. G. V. R.
WHO, AT THE LAST DAY, MUST
SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR " GALLOPS "

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I

HER FIRST HORSE SHOW

SHE folded the program carefully for preservation in her memory-book, and devoured the scene with her eyes. It was hard to believe, but unquestionably Angelica Stanton, in the flesh, was in Madison Square Garden at the horse show. The great arena was crowded; the band was playing, and a four-in-hand was swinging around the tan-bark ring.

What had been her dream since she put away her dolls and the flea-bitten pony was realized. The pony had been succeeded by Lady Washington, and with Lady Washington opened the epoch when she began to hunt with the grown-up

people and to reflect upon the outside world. From what she had gathered from the men in the hunting-field, the outside world seemed to center in the great horse show, and most of what was interesting and delightful in life took place there.

Besides the obvious profit of witnessing this institution, there had arisen, later on, more serious considerations which led Angelica to take an interest in it. Since the disappearance of Lady Washington and the failure to trace her, Angelica's hope was in the show.

One of the judges who had visited Jim had unwittingly laid the bases of this hope. "All the best performers in America are exhibited there," he had said in the course of an interminable discussion upon the great subject. And was not Lady Washington probably the best? Clearly, therefore, soon or late Lady Washington would be found winning blue ribbons at Madison Square Garden.

To this cheering conclusion the doubting Thomas within her replied that so desirable a miracle could never be; and

she cherished the doubt, though rather to provoke contrary fate into refuting it than because it embodied her convictions. She knew that some day Lady Washington must come back.

After Jim had sold Lady Washington, he had been informed by Chloe, the parlor-maid, how Angelica felt, and he repented his act. He had tried to buy the mare back, but the man to whom he had sold her had sold her to a dealer, and he had sold her to somebody who had gone abroad, and no one knew what this person had done with her. So Lady Washington had disappeared, and Angelica mourned for her. Two years passed, two years that were filled with doubt and disappointment. Each autumn Jim went North with his horses, but never suggested taking Angelica. As for Angelica, the subject was too near her heart for her to broach it. Thus it seemed that life was slipping away, harshly withholding opportunity.

That November, for reasons of his own, Jim decided to take Angelica along with

him. When he told her of his intention, she gasped, but made no demonstration. On the threshold of fulfilling her hope she was afraid to exult: she knew how things are snatched away the moment one begins to count upon them; but inwardly she was happy to the point of apprehension. On the trip North she "knocked wood" scrupulously every time she was lured into a day-dream which pictured the finding of Lady Washington, and thus she gave the evil forces of destiny no opening.

The first hour of the show overwhelmed her. It was too splendid and mystifying to be comprehended immediately, or to permit a divided attention. Even Lady Washington dropped out of her thoughts, but only until the jumping classes began. The first hunter that trotted across the tan-bark brought her back to her quest.

But after two days the mystery was no more a mystery, and the splendor had faded out. The joy of it had faded out, too. For two days she had pored over the entry-lists and had studied every horse that entered the ring; but the

search for Lady Washington had been a vain one. Furthermore, all the best horses by this time had appeared in some class, and the chances of Lady Washington turning up seemed infinitesimal. Reluctantly she gave up hope. She explained it to herself that probably there had been a moment of vainglorious pride when she had neglected to "knock wood." She would have liked to discuss it with somebody; but Chloe and her colored mammy, who understood such matters, were at the "Pines" in Virginia, and Jim would probably laugh at her; so she maintained silence and kept her despair to herself.

It was the evening of the third day, and she was at the show again, dressed in her habit, because she was going to ride. Her brother was at the other end of the Garden, hidden by a row of horses. He was waiting to show in a class of park hacks. There was nothing in it that looked like Lady Washington, and she turned her eyes away from the ring with a heavy heart. The band had stopped playing, and there was no one to talk to

but her aunt's maid, and this maid was not companionable. She fell to watching the people in the boxes; she wished that she knew some of them. There was a box just below her which looked attractive. There were two pretty women in it, and some men who looked as if they were nice; they were laughing and seemed to be having a good time. She wished she was with them, or home, or anywhere else than where she was.

Presently the music struck up again; the hum of the innumerable voices took a higher pitch. The ceaseless current of promenaders staring and bowing at the boxes went slowly around and around. Nobody paid any attention to the horses, but all jostled and chattered and craned their necks to see the people. When her brother's Redgauntlet took the blue ribbon in the heavy-weight green-hunter class, not a person in the whole Garden applauded except herself. She heard a man ask, "What took the blue?" And she heard his friend answer, "Southern horse, I believe; don't know the owner." They

did n't even know Jim! She would have left the place and gone back to her aunt's for a comfortable cry, but she was going to ride Hilda in the ladies' saddle class, which came toward the end of the evening.

The next thing on the program were some qualified hunters which might be expected to show some good jumping. This was something to be thankful for, and she turned her attention to the ring.

"I think I 'll go down on the floor," she said to the maid. "I 'm tired of sitting still."

In theory Miss Angelica Stanton was at the horse show escorted by her brother; but in fact she was in the custody of Caroline, the maid of her aunt Henrietta Cushing, who lived in Washington Square. Miss Cushing was elderly, and she disapproved of the horse show because her father had been a charter member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and because to go to it in the afternoon interfered with her drive and with her tea, while to go to it in the evening interfered with her whist, and

that was not to be thought of. Consequently, when Angelica arrived, the horse show devolved upon Caroline, who accepted the situation not altogether with resignation. She had done Miss Cushing's curls for twenty years, and had absorbed her views.

Angelica would have preferred stopping at the hotel with Jim; but that, he said, was out of the question. Jim admitted that Aunt Henrietta was never intentionally entertaining, but he said that Angelica needed her womanly influence. Jim had brought up Angelica, and the problem sometimes seemed a serious one. She was now sixteen, and he was satisfied that she was going to be a horsewoman, but at times he doubted whether his training was adequate in other respects, and that was why he had brought her to the horse show and had incarcerated her at Aunt Henrietta's.

The girl led Caroline through the crowd, and took a position at the end, between the first and last jumps. As the horses were shown, they went round the

ring, came back, and finished in front of them. It was the best place from which to watch, if one wished to see the jumping.

Angelica admitted to herself that some of the men rode pretty well, but not as well as some of the men rode at their out-of-door shows at home; and the tan-bark was not as good as turf. It was a large class, and after eight or ten had been shown, a striking-looking black mare came out of the line and started plunging and rearing toward the first jump. Her rider faced her at the bars, and she minced reluctantly forward. Just before they reached the wings the man struck her. She stopped short and whirled back into the ring.

From the time the black mare appeared Angelica's heart almost stopped beating. "I 'm sure of it, I 'm sure of it!" she gasped. "Three white feet and the star. Caroline," she said, "that 's Lady Washington. He ought n't to strike her. He must n't! "

"Hush, miss," said Caroline. "We 'll be conspicuous."

The man was bringing the mare back toward the jump. As before, he used his whip, intending to drive her into the wings, and, as before, she stopped, reared angrily, wheeled about, and came back plunging. The man quieted her after a little, and turned her again toward the hurdle. It was his last chance. She came up sulkily, tossing her head and edging away from the bars. As he got near the wings he raised his whip again.

Then the people in that part of the Garden heard a girl's shrill, excited voice cry out: "You must n't hit her! Steady, Lady Washington! Drop your curb!"

The black mare's ears went forward at the sound of the voice. The young man on her back put down his uplifted whip and loosened the rein on the bit. He glanced around with an embarrassed smile, and the next instant he was over the jump, and the mare was galloping for the hurdle beyond.

Suddenly Angelica became conscious that several thousand people were staring at her with looks of wonder and amuse-

ment. Caroline clutched her arm and dragged her away from the rail. The girl colored, and shook herself free.

"I don't care," she said. "He should n't have hit her. She can jump anything if she 's ridden right. I knew we 'd find her," she muttered excitedly. "I knew it!"

Caroline struggled desperately through the crowd with her charge.

"Whatever will Miss Cushing say!" she gasped.

Angelica forgot the crowd. "I don't care," she said. "If Aunt Henrietta had ever owned Lady Washington she 'd have done the same thing. And if you tell her I 'll pay you back. She 'll know that you let me leave my seat, and she told you not to." This silenced Caroline.

"There! He 's fussed her mouth again," she went on. The black mare had refused, and was rearing at the jump next the last. The girl stood on tiptoe and watched impatiently for a moment.

"There she goes," she murmured, with a sigh. The judges had ordered the horse out.

Angelica tagged along disconsolately through the crowd till a conversation between two men who were leaning against the rail caught her ear.

"I wonder who that little girl was," said one. "The mare seemed to know her voice, but Reggie does n't call her Lady Washington."

"No—Hermione," said the other. "He may have changed it, though," he added. "He gives them all names beginning with H."

"You 'll have an easy time beating him in the five-foot-six jumps," said the first man. "It 's a good mare, but he can't ride her."

Angelica wondered who they were, but they turned around just then, and she dropped her eyes and hurried after Caroline.

As they made their way through the crowd, a nudge from the maid took her thoughts from Lady Washington. She had been wondering how she would find the young man who had ridden her. She looked up and saw that a man was bowing

to her. It was Mr. "Billy" Livingstone. Mr. Livingstone was nearly sixty, but he had certain qualities of permanent youth which made him "Billy" to three generations.

"Hello, Angelica!" he exclaimed. "When did you turn up? How you've grown!"

"I came up North with Jim," she replied.

"You should have let me know," he said. "You know Jim never writes any one. This is the first time I've been here. I'm just back from the country. Where's your box—that is, who are you with?"

"I'm here with my maid," said Angelica, with a somewhat conscious dignity. "Jim is with the horses."

Livingstone looked from the slender girl to the substantial Caroline, and the corners of his mouth twitched.

"I prefer to be alone this way," she explained. "It's more independent."

Mr. Livingstone thought a moment. "Of course that's so," he said. "But I

think I 've got a better plan; let 's hunt up Mrs. Dicky Everett."

"Is she an old woman?" asked Angelica.

"Not so terribly old," said Mr. Livingstone. "I suppose you 'd call her middle-aged."

"Thirty?" asked Angelica.

"Near it, I 'm afraid," he answered.

"Well, I don't know," said Angelica. "That 's pretty old. She won't have anything to say to me."

"She knows something about a horse," said Livingstone, "though, of course, she can't ride the way you do. If you find her stupid, I 'll take you away; but I want you to come because she will be very nice to me for bringing you."

He turned to Caroline. "I 'm a friend of Miss Stanton's brother. Go to your seat, and I 'll bring Miss Stanton back to you."

Then he led the way up the stairs, and Angelica followed, wondering what sort of person Mrs. "Dicky" Everett might be.

She cheered herself with the thought

that she could not be any older or more depressing than Aunt Henrietta, and if she was fond of horses she might know who owned Lady Washington.

Livingstone consulted his program. "It 's down on this side," he said. She followed him mechanically, with her eyes wandering toward the ring, till presently they stopped.

"Hello!" she heard them call to Livingstone, as he stepped in ahead of her, and the next moment she realized that she was in the very box which she had watched from her seat among the chairs.

"I want to present you to my friend Miss Stanton," Livingstone said. He repeated the names, but they made no impression upon her, because there, standing in front of her, was the young man who had ridden Lady Washington.

"You seem to know each other," said Livingstone. "Am I wasting my breath? Is this a joke?"

He looked at Angelica. She was speechless with mixed joy and embarrassment.

"Come here, my dear," said one of the two pretty women, "and sit down beside me. Miss Stanton," she went on to Livingstone, "very kindly tried to teach Reggie how to ride Hermione, and we are glad to have the chance to thank her."

"I don't understand at all," said Livingstone. "But there are so many things that I shall never understand that one more makes no difference."

Angelica's self-confidence began to come back.

"Why, he was riding Lady Washington with a whip," she explained. "And I just called out to him not to. You remember Lady Washington,—she was a four-year-old when you were at the Pines,—and you know you never could touch her with a whip."

"I remember very well," said Livingstone. "You flattered me by offering to let me ride her, an offer which, I think, I declined. When did you sell her?"

"Two years ago," said Angelica.

Then the other young woman spoke. "But how did you recognize the horse?"

she asked. "You have n't seen it for two years."

"Recognize her!" exclaimed Angelica. "I guess if you had ever owned Lady Washington you would have recognized her. I broke her as a two-year-old, and schooled her myself. Jim says she 's the best mare we ever had." Angelica looked at the woman pityingly. She was sweet-looking and had beautiful clothes, but she was evidently a goose.

"Miss Stanton won the high jump with the mare," Livingstone remarked, "at their hunt show down in Virginia."

"It was only six feet," said the girl, "but she can do better than that. Jim would n't let me ride her at anything bigger."

"I should hope not," said the lady by whose side she was sitting. Then she asked suddenly, "You are not Jimmie Stanton's sister?"

"Yes," said Angelica.

"I 'd like to know why he has n't brought you to see me!"

"He 's awfully busy with the horses,"

the girl replied. "He has to stop at the Waldorf and see about the show with the men, and he makes me stay with Aunt Henrietta Cushing." She stopped abruptly. She was afraid that what she had said might sound disloyal. "I like to stop with Aunt Henrietta," she added solemnly. "Besides, I've been busy looking for Lady Washington."

The young man whom they called Reggie, together with Mr. Livingstone and the lady beside Angelica, laughed openly at this allusion to Miss Cushing.

"Do you know her?" asked Angelica.

"Oh, everybody knows your Aunt Henrietta," said the lady.

"And loves her," added Livingstone, solemnly.

The lady laughed a little. "You see, she's connected with nearly everybody. She's a sort of connection of Reggie's and mine, so I suppose we're sort of cousins of yours. I hope you will like us."

"I don't know much about my relations on my mother's side," Angelica

observed. The distinction between connections and relatives had never been impressed upon her. She was about to add that Jim said that his New York relatives tired him, but caught herself. She paused uneasily.

"Please excuse me," she said, "but I did n't hear Mr. Livingstone introduce me to you."

"Why," said Livingstone, who overheard, "this is Mrs. Everett. I told you we were coming into her box."

"I thought she must have stepped out," said Angelica. "You told me she was middle-aged."

A peal of laughter followed.

"Angelica! Angelica!" Livingstone exclaimed.

"But you did," said Angelica. "I asked you if she was an old lady, and you said, 'Not so terribly old—middle-aged.' And she 's not; she 's young."

"Things can never be as they were before," said Livingstone, mournfully, as the laughter died away.

"No," said Mrs. Everett.

There was a pause, and one of the men turned to Reggie. "What are you going to do about the five-foot-six jumps?"

"Let it go," said Reggie.

"It 's a pity," said the other. "If you had met Miss Stanton earlier in the evening, I think she could have taught you to ride that mare. I wanted to see you win your bet."

"Bet?" said Livingstone.

"Reggie 's such an idiot," said Mrs. Everett. "He bet Tommy Post that Hermione would beat his chestnut in the five-foot-six jumps, and Reggie can't make Hermione jump at all, so he 's lost."

"Not yet; I 've got a chance," said Reggie, good-naturedly. "Perhaps I 'll go in, after all." The other men laughed.

"I should think you had made monkey enough of yourself for one evening," observed Palfrey, who was his best friend and could say such things.

"Five feet six would be easy for Lady Washington," said Angelica. "I can't get used to calling her by that new name." She hesitated a moment with embarrass-

ment, and then she stammered: "Why don't you let *me* ride her?"

The people in the box looked aghast.

"I 'm afraid it would n't do," said Reggie, seriously. "It 's awfully good of you, but, you see, it would n't look well to put a lady on that horse. Suppose something should happen?"

"Good of me!" the girl exclaimed. "I 'd love it! I want to ride her again so much!"

"Well," said Reggie, "I 'll have her at the park for you to-morrow morning. You can ride her whenever you like."

A low cry of alarm ran through the Garden, and the conversation in the box hushed. A tandem cart had tipped over, and the wheeler was kicking it to pieces.

"I don't like that sort of thing," said Mrs. Everett, with a shudder.

They finally righted the trap, and the driver limped off to show that he was not hurt. The great crowd seemed to draw a long breath of relief, and the even hum of voices went on again. The judges

began to award the ribbons, and Angelica looked down at her program.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed. "The saddle class I 'm going to ride in is next. I 'm afraid I 'll be late. Good-by."

"Good-by," they all replied.

"Don't you come," she said to Livingstone. "It 's just a step."

"I must keep my word with Caroline," he answered, and he took her to her seat.

"She 's immense, is n't she?" he said, as he came back. "I 'm glad Reggie did n't let her ride that brute. She will be killed one of these days."

"She 's going to be a great beauty," said Mrs. Everett.

"She looks like her blessed mother," said Livingstone. "I was very fond of her mother. I think that if it had n't been for Stanton—"

"Stop!" interrupted Mrs. Everett. "Your heart-tragedies are too numerous. Besides, if you *had* married her you would n't be here trying to tell us why you did n't." And they all laughed, and

cheerfully condemned the judging of the tandem class.

THE negro groom who had come up with the Stanton horses met Angelica as she was going down-stairs into the basement where the stalls were. Jim had not appeared, so Angelica and Caroline had started off alone.

"Hilda's went lame behind, Miss Angie," the man said. "She must have cast huhself. They ain't no use to show huh."

Ordinarily this calamity would have disturbed Angelica, but the discovery of Lady Washington was a joy which could not be dimmed.

"Have you told my brother?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Angie," said the man. "He was gwine to tell you."

"I want to see her," said Angelica, and they went on toward the stall. But what Angelica most wanted was to get among the horses and look for a certain black mare.

Hilda was very lame, and there was fever in the hock. Angelica patted her neck, and turned away with a side glance at Caroline, who, she feared, would rebel at being led through the horses' quarters. She walked down the row of stalls till she came to the corner, then up through another passage till she stopped at a big box-stall over the side of which stretched a black head set on a long, thoroughbred-looking neck.

The small, fine ears, the width between the eyes, the square little muzzle, were familiar; and there was a white star on the forehead. But Angelica did not enumerate these things. Horses to her had personalities and faces, just as people had them. She recognized Lady Washington as she had recognized Mr. Livingstone. She made a little exclamation, and, standing on tiptoe, put her arms about the mare's neck, and kissed it again and again.

"The dear! She remembers me!" the girl said, wiping her eyes. It's Lady Washington," she explained to Caroline.

She reached up to fondle the little muzzle, and the mare nipped playfully.

"Look out, miss," called the stable-boy, who was sitting on a soap-box; "she 's mean."

"She 's no such thing," said the girl.

"Oh, ain't she?" said the boy.

"Well, if she is, you made her so," retorted Angelica.

The boy grinned. "I ain't only been in the stable two weeks," he said. "She caught me on the second day and nigh broke me leg. You see her act in the ring? Mr. Haughton says he won't ride her no more, and she 's entered in the five-foot-six jumps."

The girl looked thoughtfully at the boy and then at the horse. An idea had come to her. She was reflecting upon the last words Mr. Haughton had spoken before she left the box: "*You can ride her whenever you like.*"

"I know," she said aloud. "I 'm going to ride her in that class. I 'm Miss Stanton. I used to own her, you know. My saddle is down there with Mr. Stanton's

horses, and I want you to go and get it."

"Oh, never, Miss Angelica!" exclaimed Caroline. "Dear me, not that!"

"You hush," said Angelica.

The stable-boy looked at her incredulously. "I ain't had no orders, miss," he said. "I 'll have to see William. Did Mr. Haughton say you might?"

"Of course he said I might," she replied.

The boy said no more and went off after William.

"Of course he said I might," she repeated half aloud. "Did n't he say I might ride her 'whenever I wanted to'? 'Whenever' is any time, and I want to now." She fortified herself behind this sophistry, but she was all in a flutter lest Jim or Mr. Haughton should appear. The thought, however, of being on Lady Washington's back, and showing people that she was n't sulky and bad-tempered, was a temptation too strong to be resisted.

The boy came back with the head groom, to whom he had explained the matter.

"Why, miss," said William, "she 'd kill you. I would n't want to show her myself. Mr. Haughton, miss, must have been joking. Honest, miss, you could n't ride Hermione." The man was respectful but firm.

"Think what Miss Cushing would say," said Caroline.

"But I tell you I can," retorted Angelica. She paid no attention to Caroline; her temper flashed up. "You don't seem to understand. I owned that mare when she was Lady Washington, and broke her all myself, and schooled her, too. Mr. Haughton has n't any 'hands,' and he ought to know better than to raise a whip on her."

William grinned at the unvarnished statement about his master's "hands."

"Are you the young lady what called out to him in the ring?" he asked.

"Yes, I am," said Angelica. "And if he 'd done what I told him to she would have won. Here 's our Emanuel," she went on. "He 'll tell you I can ride her. Emanuel," she demanded, as the negro

approached, "have n't I ridden Lady Washington?"

"You jest have, Miss Angie," said Emanuel. "Why," said he, turning to William, "this heah young lady have rode that maah ovah six feet. She done won the high jump at ouah hunt show. That's Lady Washington all right," he went on, looking at the head poked out over the stall. "I got huh maahk on mah ahm foh to remembah huh."

The stable-boy grinned.

"Well, she never bit me," said Angelica.

"The young lady," said William, doubtfully, "wants to ride her in the five-foot-six class. She says Mr. Haughton said she might."

"Oh, Miss Angelica," interposed Caroline, "you'll be kilt!"

"You're a goose," said Angelica. "I've ridden her hundreds of times."

"I don't know how Mistah Jim would like it," said Emanuel; "but she could ride that maah all right, you jest bet."

William was getting interested. He was

not so concerned about Mr. Stanton's likes as he was that his stable should take some ribbons.

"Mr. Haughton said you might ride her?" he repeated.

"Of course he did," said Angelica; "I just left him in Mrs. Everett's box, and I've got my own saddle and everything."

"All right, miss," said William. "Get the saddle, Tim."

William did not believe that Mr. Haughton had given any such orders, but he had gotten into trouble not long before by refusing to give a mount to a friend of Haughton's whom he did not know and who came armed only with verbal authority. He knew that if any harm was done he could hide behind that occurrence.

"I want a double-reined snaffle," said Angelica. "Emanuel," she added, "you have the bit I used to ride her with. Bring my own bridle."

"I'm afraid you won't be able to hold her, miss," muttered William; "but it's as you say. Hurry up with that saddle,"

he called to the stable-boy. "We ain't got no time to lose. They 're callin' the class now. You 're number two, miss; I'll get your number for you."

"You 'll be kilt! You 'll be kilt!" said Caroline, dolefully. "Think what Miss Cushing will say!"

"Caroline," said Angelica, "you don't know anything about horses, so you hush." And then she added under her breath, "If I can only get started before Jim sees me!"

IN the Everett box they were waiting for the five-foot-six class to begin. They called it the five-foot-six class because there were four jumps that were five feet six inches high; the others were an even five feet. It was the "sensational event" of the evening. Thus far the show had been dull.

"Those saddle-horses were an ordinary lot," observed Reggie.

"This is n't opening very well, either," said Palfrey. The first horse had started out by refusing. Then he floundered into the jump and fell.

"Let 's not wait," said Mrs. Everett. But the words were hardly spoken when, with a quick movement, she turned her glasses on the ring. Something unusual was going on at the farther end. A ripple of applause came down the sides of the Garden, and then she saw a black horse, ridden by a girl, come cantering toward the starting-place.

"It 's that child on Hermione! You must stop it, Reggie!" she exclaimed excitedly.

Before any one could move, Angelica had turned the horse toward the first jump. It looked terribly high to Mrs. Everett. It was almost even with the head of the man who was standing on the farther side ready to replace the bars if they should be knocked down.

Tossing her head playfully, the black mare galloped steadily for the wings, took off in her stride, and swept over the jump in a long curve. She landed noiselessly on the tan-bark, and was on again. Around the great ring went the horse and the girl, steadily, not too fast, and taking each

jump without a mistake. The great crowd remained breathless and expectant. Horse and rider finished in front of the Everett box, and pulled up to a trot, the mare breathing hard with excitement, but well-mannered.

Then a storm of cheers and hand-clapping burst, the like of which was never heard at a New York horse show before.

As the applause died away, Reggie rose and hurried out. "Let's all go," said Mrs. Everett.

Before they got through the crowd the judges had awarded the ribbons. There were only three other horses that went over all the jumps, and none of them made a clean score. There was no question about which was first. The judges ran their hands down the mare's legs in a vain search for lumps. She was short-coupled, with a beautiful shoulder and powerful quarters. She had four crosses of thoroughbred, and showed it.

"She's a picture mare," said one of the judges, and he tied the blue rosette to her bridle himself. Then the great crowd

cheered and clapped again, and Angelica rode down to the entrance as calmly as if she were in the habit of taking blue ribbons daily. But inside she was not calm.

"I've got to cry or something," she thought.

At the gate some one came out of the crowd and took the mare by the head. Angelica looked down, and there were her brother and Reggie and Mrs. Everett's party. The Garden began to swim.

"Oh, Jim!" she murmured, "help me down. It's Lady Washington." Then she threw her arms around his neck and wept.

THEY were at supper in the old Waldorf Palm Room before Angelica was quite certain whether actual facts had been taking place or whether she had been dreaming. It seemed rather too extraordinary and too pleasant to be true. Still, she was sure that she was there, because the people stared at her when she came in dressed in her habit, and whispered to each other about her. Furthermore, a

party of the judges came over and asked Mrs. Everett to present them.

There never before was quite such an evening. It was after twelve, at least, and nobody had suggested that she ought to be in bed. One pleasant thing followed another in quick succession, and there seemed no end to them. She was absorbed in an edible rapture which Mrs. Everett called a "café parfait" when she became aware that Reggie's friend Mr. Palfrey had started to address the party. She only half listened, because she was wondering why every one except Mrs. Everett and herself had denied himself this delightful sweet. Grown-up people had strange tastes.

Mr. Palfrey began by saying that he thought it was time to propose a toast in honor of Miss Stanton, which might also rechristen Reggie's mare by her first and true name, "Lady Washington." He said that it was plain to him that the mare had resented a strange name out of Greek mythology, and in future would go kindly, particularly if Reggie never tried to ride her again.

He went on with his remarks, and from time to time the people interrupted with laughter; but it was only a meaningless sound in Angelica's ears. The words "Reggie's mare" had come like a blow in the face. She had forgotten about that. Her knees grew weak and a lump swelled in her throat. It was true, of course, but for the time being it had passed out of her mind. And now that Lady Washington had won the five-foot-six class and was so much admired, probably Jim could not afford to buy her back. It was doubtful if Mr. Haughton would sell her at any price.

Presently she was aroused by a remark addressed directly to her.

'I think that 's a good idea," said Reggie. "Don't you?"

She nodded; but she did not know what the idea was, and she did not trust her voice to ask.

"Only," he continued, turning to Palfrey, "it is n't my mare any more; it's Miss Stanton's. Put that in, Palfrey."

Angelica's mouth opened in wonderment and her heart stood still. She looked about the table blankly.

"It's so," said Reggie; "she's yours."

"But I can't take her," she said falteringly. "She's too valuable. Can I, Jim?"

"But Jim's bought her," said Reggie, hurriedly.

Angelica's eyes settled on her brother's face; he said nothing, but began to smile; Reggie was kicking him under the table.

"Yes," said Reggie; "when I saw you ride Lady Washington, that settled it with me. I'm too proud to stand being beaten by a girl; so I made Jim buy her back and promise to give her to you."

"Do you mean it?" said Angelica. "Is Lady Washington really mine?"

"Yes," he said.

She dropped her hands in her lap and sighed wearily. "It does n't seem possible," she murmured. She paused and seemed to be running over the situation in her mind. Presently she spoke as if unaware that the others were listening. "I knew it would happen, though," she said. "I knew it. I reckon I prayed enough." She smiled as a great thrill of happiness

ran through her, and glancing up, saw that all the rest were smiling, too.

"I 'm so happy," she said apologetically. Then she bethought herself, and furtively reached down and tapped the frame of her chair with her knuckles.

"Well, here 's the toast," said Mr. Palfrey, rising. "To the lady and Lady Washington." And they all rose and drank it standing.

ISABELLA

II

ISABELLA

“THAT ’s all,” said Mr. Parsons Scott. He waved his hand at the groom, directing him to take the horse which was loose in the paddock back to the stable.

“They are a good lot,” observed Mr. Carteret. He had been putting in the morning inspecting Mr. Scott’s hunters.

Parsons Scott had an office in town, at which an office-boy might sometimes be found. Scott’s personal attention was devoted to the purchase, education, and sale of hunters. As a prudent grandparent had provided him with an income, he was able to live in the country with comfort and to maintain the town office and his horse business as well.

"I'm glad you like them," replied Scott, referring to Mr. Carteret's commendation of his horses. Carteret's opinion was expert.

"Yes," repeated Mr. Carteret; "they are a good lot. They are better than Harrington's and better than Brown's. But I really don't think there is anything that will do for me. As I told you, I want something like old Elevator—something that jumps exceptionally big and sure."

"The only other thing which I have is a mare that came yesterday from Canada," observed Scott. "I have n't had her out yet. I got her in a trade, and probably something is the matter with her; but they say she can jump. Bring out Isabella!" he called to the groom—"the new chestnut mare."

"Did you give her that name?" inquired Mr. Carteret.

"No," said Scott; "I should n't name a horse Isabella."

"I did n't know," observed Mr. Carteret. "I thought you might be growing sentimental. It's a pretty name for a gentle mare."

"Stuff!" said Scott.

"Quite an animal," observed Mr. Carteret, as the mare trotted into the paddock. "Sporty-looking, is n't she? White blaze and stockings and a piece out of her ear. She is uncommonly well made," he went on; "but her head is coarse, and she carries it too knowingly for a picture horse."

"Yes," said Scott. "I am sorry about the nick in her ear. It takes a hundred off her value. But she is a mare with a lot of character—the kind that can look out for herself and you too."

Carteret nodded. "Turn her at the jump," he said to the groom. In the paddock there was a made jump, with wings, over which horses could be chased without riders on their backs. The bars were about five feet high when Carteret spoke.

"That's too high to start with," said Scott. "She is just off the car."

The groom, who had started to drive the horse, stopped.

"Let it down to four feet," Scott continued.

"Yes, sir," he said.

Before he reached the jump Scott called him back. Isabella was trotting leisurely into the wings of her own accord.

"Look!" said Scott.

The mare reached the jump, popped over it, gave a whisk of her closely docked tail, and began placidly to graze.

"That 's a very remarkable horse," observed Carteret.

"She likes it," said Scott. "Put the bars up to six feet," he called.

The groom adjusted the bars and herded Isabella around in front of the wings again. She looked languidly at the jump, and started for it at a slow canter. She cleared it as easily as before, and went to cropping tufts of grass again.

Parsons Scott swelled visibly with pride. "She just plays over six feet," he said. "It 's chocolate-drops for her, Carty," he continued. "This is a horse."

"I think it is," said Mr. Carteret, rather humbly for him. "Let 's try seven feet."

"Please, sir," said the groom, "we can't put the bars up no higher."

"Well, never mind," said Carteret.

"Scotty," he continued, "I think this one will do. I might as well tell you the truth. I 'm looking for something for a—" He hesitated. "I 'm looking for a lady's hunter, and I want a natural big jumper, something that *can't* make a mistake. If this mare is only sound—"

"She is sound," Scott broke in. "I might as well tell you the truth, too. She is a perfect lady's hunter. I got her somewhat reasonably because she kicked a man's buggy to pieces. He was an idiot who left her tied in a village street in fly-time. A traction-engine came past, and the buggy melted away. I should n't exactly guarantee her to drive, but you can see yourself she 's gentle as a kitten. She 's a perfect pet for a girl."

"I did n't say it was for a girl," observed Mr. Carteret.

Scott looked at him, but made no reply. He picked up a green apple that lay by the paddock fence and held it out to the mare. Isabella came forward promptly and took it. "Look!" he said. "She 'll eat out of your hand."

"That is very affecting," said Mr. Carteret.

"She will probably come around to driving in time," observed Scott. "Suppose we see her under saddle."

"I should like to see her under saddle," said Mr. Carteret.

Scott spoke to the groom, and he led Isabella into the stable. While they waited, the two sat on the top board of the paddock fence and discussed the question of price.

"I think the mare," observed Scott, "is certainly worth a thousand dollars. She 'd bring that on her jumping alone, and—"

"But I tell you that 's too much," said Mr. Carteret; "my commission does n't authorize me to spend so much: and yet, I want the horse."

"I was about to say," continued Scott, "when you interrupted me, that on account of the buggy affair I would sell her for exactly—" He stopped. There was a clatter in the stable, and somersaulting through the air out of the doorway shot

Scott's groom, followed by Isabella, who trotted to a spot where the grass was tender and began to graze.

Scott jumped down from the fence. "What have you got under that mare's saddle?" he bawled at the groom.

"Nothing, sir," said the man, who was picking himself up.

"From the way he came off," observed Mr. Carteret, "there might be a spring-board, or almost anything of that kind."

Scott paid no attention to the joke. He went over to Isabella, who fed on, undisturbed at his approach. Taking off the saddle, he looked for nail-points and objects of a sharp or lumpy nature. There was nothing there. Saddle and leather pad were in perfect repair.

"You must have done something to her," said Scott. "I 'll ride her myself."

The groom acquiesced obediently. Scott mounted, and Isabella stood meekly till he was on and had both his feet home in the stirrups. "Now," he said, "I shall move her around the paddock, slowly at first."

He spoke to Isabella, telling her to "Get up"; and then, placidly and more in sorrow than in anger, the mare gave three bucks. The first was a large one, but Scott hung on. With the second, which was larger, he was on her withers. On the third buck she shook out all reefs and sent him crashing through the top board of the paddock fence. He landed outside, surprised but uninjured.

"I have been to all the Wild West Shows," observed Mr. Carteret from the fence; "I think you have the best buckner I ever saw. Are you hurt?"

"I shall fix that mare," said Scott, gloomy with rage. He called to the man: "Bring out a harness-bridle with a check-rein, and some strong cord." He climbed back over the fence. "Look at her!" he said. The mare had gone back to the plot of tender grass. The episode seemed to have stirred no evil passions in her.

"She certainly is a mare of character," observed Mr. Carteret, thoughtfully.

Scott watched her in silence until the groom came out with the bearing-rein and

string; then he approached Isabella and proceeded to arrange the apparatus, and Isabella made no remonstrance. "Do you see," said Scott, "how she can get her head down now?"

"No," said Mr. Carteret, doubtfully. There was something in Isabella's resourceful calm which impressed him and made him uncertain of everything.

Scott mounted, and clucked to Isabella to start. Then a curious thing happened. She made no attempt to fight the bearing-rein and buck. She lifted her fore legs and reared rather slowly until she was perpendicular.

"Look out! She's going over!" said Mr. Carteret.

As he spoke she dropped over on her back.

Scott had anticipated her action. He slid off before she came down, and rolled himself out of her way. He arose hastily, and, with such dignity as a man can command who has been rolling in the soil of his paddock, said to the groom, "You may take the mare to the stable." Then

he climbed to the top of the paddock fence and sat down beside Carteret. "Carty," he said after a long silence, "I had always believed that a horse that was well checked up could n't rear."

Carteret tapped the fence boards thoughtfully with his ratan stick. "Old man," he said, "as we go on in life we lose many of our young beliefs."

There was a long silence. Scott made no answer. "I think," he observed presently, "that a trap just now turned into the driveway."

They could see the house from where they sat, and they watched and waited. In a few moments they saw Williams, the indoor man, come out and hurry down the walk toward the stables.

"You might brush yourself," suggested Mr. Carteret. "A man who sells horses ought not to be found at his own stables with so much mud on the back of his coat."

"Brush me," said Scott. "Who is it?" he called to the man as he approached.

"Mr. Henderson Lamppie, sir," said the man.

Scott jumped down from the fence and twisted his mustache for a moment. "I don't think I can stand him to-day," he said, as if speaking to himself.

Mr. Carteret also came down from the fence. "Old man," he said, "I ought to be going."

Scott looked at him in surprise. "But you said you 'd stop for lunch," he said plaintively, "and it is almost ready."

"I know," said Mr. Carteret; "but I forgot about an appointment. I must hurry."

"Carty," said Scott, "if you leave me alone with Henderson Lamppie, it never can be the same between us."

"Well," said Carteret, "if you put it that way, I shall have to stay; but I may not be very civil."

"You can be what you please," said Scott. "Tell Mr. Lamppie," he said to the man, "that we are at the stables. Put another place at lunch, and make my excuses for not going up to the house to meet him. Carty," added Scott, after the man had gone, "what an odious little beast that fellow is!"

"The most odious," said Mr. Carteret.

"Carty," said Scott, "don't you think it strange that a girl like Elizabeth Heminway should stand having him about? Those Dago diplomats are bad enough, but Lamppie is worse."

"That thought has occurred to me," said Mr. Carteret.

"Carty," said Scott, "I feel that we ought to do something to save Elizabeth Heminway. One of us ought to marry her."

Carteret laughed softly. "That thought, too, has occurred to me," he said; "but not the part of it which introduces you."

"Well, ride up, then," said Scott. "Go out in front. I'll give you the panel first."

"It is foolish," said Carteret, slowly, "to ride for a fall when you know the landing is hard."

"Falls be hanged!" said Scott. "If white men like you are going to funk, probably some Dago or Chineese will marry her, or Lamppie."

"Very probably," said Mr. Carteret. "It is apt to be that way."

"Well, something ought to be done," said Scott.

"That 's true," said Carteret.

"We might begin by murdering Lampie," suggested Scott.

"Why not put him on Isabella?" said Mr. Carteret. "It 's more lawful."

"That might be better," said Scott. "He 's coming."

Carteret glanced at the approaching figure, and then looked gravely at a mud-puddle about fifty feet beyond the paddock fence. "Do you think," he said, "that she could buck him over the fence into that?"

"I think she could," said Scott; "but probably she would n't: she 's too contrary."

"Probably not," said Mr. Carteret, with a sigh.

"Hallo, you chaps!" called out Mr. Lamppie, when he came within hearing distance. "I say, Scotty, have you got a good one for me? I 'm in a hurry, and can't look the string over, but I want the best you 've got—something that can take care of himself."

Scott came down from the fence and greeted Mr. Lamppie. "We have just been looking at the biggest jumper I have. She is likewise, in my opinion, the most capable of looking out for herself."

"Is that so, Carty?" said Mr. Lamppie.

"It is," said Mr. Carteret.

"Trot her out," said Lamppie. "That's what I'm looking for."

Scott called to the stable: "Bring out Isabella again."

"Under saddle, sir?" asked the man.

"I'd rather see her stripped first," said Lamppie. "You see, I can tell at a glance whether there is any use seeing her jump."

The groom came out with Isabella.

"Not a bad-looking mare," said Lamppie. He turned to Carteret. "What do you think, Carty?"

"I don't think," said Mr. Carteret, severely; "I know."

"Quite right," said Lamppie, affably; "you are quite right." Lamppie was uncomfortable when he talked horse before Mr. Carteret, who was eminent in these

matters, and he tried to put himself more at ease by being patronizing. "As I said, you are quite right," he went on; "she is dooced good-looking. Now the question is, Can she jump as I like to have them?"

"You are the only person who can decide that," said Scott. The bars were standing at six feet. "Send her over," he said to the groom.

"But, I say," interrupted Lamppie, "you're not going to start her in at six feet?"

"Why not?" said Scott, with surprise in his tone. "She plays over six feet."

The words were scarcely spoken before Isabella cantered into the wings and popped over the jump with several inches to spare.

"That is astounding," said Lamppie, "truly astounding!"

"I'm sorry," said Scott, "that we can't put the bars up higher; but if you want to ride her over the paddock fence, you may. It's not more than seven feet six."

Lamppie looked around, and his eye fell on the broken board in the paddock fence. "You have n't been sending her over that?" he said in amazement.

"That is one of Scott's reckless acts," said Carteret. "He was riding the mare in the paddock, and the first thing I knew, by Jove! he 'd taken the fence. It 's not surprising that he broke the top board, because he held on to her head shockingly. You know, Scott has bad hands."

Lamppie looked at the jump in wonder. "Did the mare go down?" he asked.

"No," said Mr. Carteret; "she never staggered."

"That is the boldest jump," said Lamppie, "that I ever heard about."

"Lamppie, you are right," said Mr. Carteret. "You 'd better get up on her back," he continued, "and try her over something yourself. You need n't select such a tall obstacle; but she won't go down with you."

"I 'm afraid I have n't time," replied Lamppie, doubtfully. He looked at his watch. "No, I have n't," he added. "I ought to be going now." When Lamppie knew that Mr. Carteret was watching him take a jump, the space between himself and the saddle, which, in fact, was not

inconsiderable, seemed at least four feet. He would come down somewhere in front of the saddle, and, to make matters worse, would hoist himself into his seat by the reins. "No," he repeated, "I have n't time; but," he continued, turning to Scott, "I'm going to take that mare on your say-so and at your own price."

"But," said Scott, "I have n't said any 'say-so,' and I don't intend to. You make a mistake to buy a horse without riding her. You see, to be honest, I don't think she'd suit you." There was a moral struggle going on within Scott, and the right triumphed. "She bucks," he said.

Mr. Carteret looked away in disgust.

"Fudge!" said Lamppie, "I don't mind a little playful bucking. It is rather pleasant to go prancing about a bit."

"It is, is n't it?" said Carteret. "It's the luxury of riding." He looked at the broken board in the fence and smiled sweetly at Lamppie.

"She bucks a good deal," said Scott.

Lamppie looked shrewdly at Scott and then at Carteret. "I see his game," he

said to himself: "he wants Carty to buy the mare." Then he said aloud: "That 's all right; I 'll take her."

"Mind, I 've warned you," said Scott. "You had better try her first."

"No time," said Lamppie. "I 'll send after her to-morrow."

"I think," began Mr. Carteret, slowly, from on top of the fence—"I think, Lamppie," he went on, "that you are funkig. She 's a bad horse. You 'd better try her before you buy."

Lamppie was now sure that Carteret wanted her. He looked knowingly at him and laughed. "Sorry I took her away from you, Carty," he said. "By-by, boys!" He waved his hand and was off.

"Well," said Mr. Carteret, after he was out of ear-shot, "*we* did n't have any fun, but Isabella will have some. Why did you try to spoil the sale of your high performer?"

Scott looked dismally at Carteret. "It is all right," he said, "to kill a man fairly, but to sell him dynamite sticks for cream candy is mean."

"You are childish," said Mr. Carteret, "and will never succeed in the horse business. As it is, do you suppose any one will believe that we have *not* unloaded Isabella on Lamppie? If you must pay the piper, why not dance?"

"I 'm afraid there is something in what you say," said Scott, sadly. "But we might have a small drink in celebration because he did n't stop to lunch."

"That is a reasonable excuse," said Mr. Carteret, and they went to the house.

The next day Scott had Isabella led by a groom eleven miles to Lamppie's establishment and delivered in good order. The day following he received Lamppie's check. In the same mail came a letter from a ranch which he supported in Montana. His manager, it appeared, had contracted bad habits, and the property was vanishing. This letter made it necessary for Scott to set out for Montana at once. Accordingly, on the third day after the delivery of Isabella, he started on his journey.

As he was boarding the train the tele-

graph-operator rushed out with a message.

"This has just come," he said.

Scott tore open the telegram. It said:

I. has begun with L. Collar-bone and shoulder-blade this morning.

C. C.

"Whew!" said Scott, softly. He got on the car and ran into Eliot Peabody.

"Has some one left you a fortune?" said Peabody, pleasantly.

"No," said Scott. "Why?"

"You look so happy," answered Peabody.

"It is very bad news," said Scott, "very regrettable." Then he sat down and read the telegram again.

Scott got back a month later, and went to work at his hunters. The first person outside his own establishment whom he saw was Mr. Carteret. Scott was schooling over some low fences, which were happily screened from the house of the man who owned them by a thick wood, when he saw Carteret hacking along the road. He went out to the road and joined him.

"That's a good-looking horse," said

Mr. Carteret, by way of a greeting, "but he 's got a spavin coming, I 'm afraid."

"Nonsense!" said Scott. But he dismounted and anxiously examined the suspected leg. "Well," he said, "if it 's a spavin it 's a spavin, and it can't be helped."

"When did you get back?" asked Carteret.

"Yesterday," Scott replied.

Carteret looked at him gravely. "Have you heard about the mare?" he said.

"What mare?" said Scott. He was still studying the prospects of spavin.

"The chestnut one, Isabella," said Carteret.

"I got your telegram," said Scott. "It was too bad about Lamppie's collar-bone."

"That was the beginning," observed Carteret.

"Did he ride her again?" asked Scott. "I never thought Lamppie was that kind of fool."

"No," Carteret answered. "She has been working with others. They 've had some drag-hounds at Newport—"

"Did they furnish sport?" interrupted Scott.

"I don't know," said Carteret; "I was afraid to go there. But I think Isabella furnished some sport. You see," Mr. Carteret continued, "I was going to Newport just after you left for the West, and then I changed my mind. I got a line from Elizabeth Heminway asking me there to stop with them."

"You did!" exclaimed Scott. "Why did n't you go? How is that girl going to be saved if you refuse to do your duty?"

"Have n't you had a letter from her?" asked Carteret.

"No," said Scott, wonderingly. "Why?"

"Have n't you heard?" said Carteret.

"Heard what?" demanded Scott.

"Why, it seems," said Mr. Carteret, slowly, "that I was not the only person commissioned to look for a lady's hunter. Lamppie was buying a horse for Miss Heminway when *you* sold him Isabella."

Scott's jaw dropped. "I did n't sell him the horse as much as you did," he said.

"That is, of course, untrue," replied Mr. Carteret; "but I am afraid that Lamppie takes your view of it."

"Was her letter severe?" asked Scott.

Carteret shook his head. "That is what scared me," he said. "It was sweet and gentle. I suspect that she wants me to ride that horse."

Scott laughed. "So you did n't go?" he asked.

"I went to Lenox instead," said Carteret. "I was there three days. The second day a man came up from Newport who is attached to the French embassy. He had his arm in a sling and his knee in a rubber bandage. He had been hunting Isabella. I left and went up to Bar Harbor. When the boat got there, they carried somebody ashore who had n't been visible on the trip. It was what's-his-name,—you know him,—one of the secretaries of the British embassy. He is a good man on a horse. He had been *breaking* Isabella for Miss Heminway. He told me all about it. Isabella caught him with a back roll and loosened his

ribs. This chap said that two horse-tamers belonging to some of the Latin legations were also laid up as the result of breaking Isabella to oblige Miss Hemingway. I left Bar Harbor in a day or two and went up to town. In the club I met Crewe and the British first secretary. They were talking about a young Spanish man who had been witching Miss Hemingway with his horsemanship. He had concussion of the brain, and they doubted whether he 'd pull through."

Carteret paused.

"Is that all?" said Scott.

"I think it is enough," said Mr. Carteret. "It has strained diplomatic relations with the powers, and though it has thinned out many undesirable admirers, it has ruined our prospects."

"I am afraid that it has not helped *you*," said Scott. "I am sure that Lamppie remembered that I warned him *not* to buy the mare."

Carteret looked at Scott with contempt.

"I 'm coming to lunch," he said, and rode off.

When Carteret arrived, Scott was reading a letter. He looked up as Carteret came in.

"It is all right," he said. "We are forgiven."

"To what do you refer?" asked Mr. Carteret.

Scott handed him the note. "It is a very sweet and noble letter," said he. "She appreciates our innocence in the matter."

"From Elizabeth?" asked Carteret, as he took it.

Scott nodded.

"She says she wants to keep the mare, much as one might preserve an historic battle-ground or the sword that slew a king."

Carteret read the letter. "She asks you down to Long Island for Sunday," he said. "Are you going?"

"I am," said Scott.

"She has asked me also," said Carteret. "I found a note from her when I got home."

"You are going, are n't you?" said Scott.

"I am in doubt," said Carteret, slowly. "I am suspicious. I have known Elizabeth Heminway for a good many years. She is forgiving and noble, but I think she would like to see us riding Isabella."

"Rubbish!" said Scott. "She can't *make* us get up on a horse we don't want to ride, and she can't trick us into it, because we know the mare. She might have her painted, but she can't put back the piece out of her ear."

"No," said Carteret, uneasily; "I suppose not. But Elizabeth is a woman of some intellect. I would n't mind the spill, but she would have a crowd around, and I don't fancy being made a Roman holiday for Lamppie and a lot of Dagos."

"You 'll go," said Scott.

"I suppose I shall have to," said Mr. Carteret. "Are we going to have any lunch?"

CARTERET and Scott arrived at Miss Heminway's on Saturday afternoon. Miss Heminway lived with an aunt, or rather she had an aunt live with her. Her

character and fortune fitted her to lead a somewhat original life and to assume much of the independence of action of a man. She had her own hunters, driving-horses, dogs, zoölogical garden pets, to say nothing of a large and ever-diversified corps of personal attachés. All these she regulated according to her own views.

Carteret and Scott had an extremely happy time. They were the only guests, and the subject of Isabella was not introduced. Once Mr. Lamppie's unfortunate accident slipped into the conversation, but Miss Heminway laughed, and looking meaningly at her friends, said: "I am willing to let bygones be bygones. Are you?"

Carteret and Scott laughed delightedly and said that they were more than willing. What pleased them especially was the double meaning of the remark, which they took to imply that Lamppie was a bygone thing in Miss Heminway's estimation.

Both walked with her, singly and together, on Sunday morning; but in the afternoon their joy clouded. Almost a

dozen people came to luncheon, and as many more appeared soon after. As a natural consequence, a kind of horse show ensued on the side lawn where the jumps were. Among those who came was Lampie. His collar-bone had knit and his shoulder was out of bandages, but he wore a silk handkerchief about his neck as a sling in which he rested his arm. He answered all inquiries as to his condition cheerfully and in detail, but he seemed to receive neither the sympathy nor the notice of Miss Heminway.

Scott observed this promptly.

"She is done with Lampie," he whispered to Carteret.

"It looks that way," Mr. Carteret answered. He never was very positive in any of his statements about Miss Heminway's probable acts.

After the company had seen Miss Heminway's fourteen hunters, and a new four had been hooked up and sent around the drive, and the ponies had been led out, and the St. Bernard puppies and two racoons and the Japanese monkey, Mr. Lampie

cheerfully inquired if there were not something more.

"There is one more horse," replied Miss Heminway. "It's a chestnut mare. But I've had her only a week, and I don't know whether she will jump or not. However, we can see."

Miss Heminway spoke to her head man, and in a few moments a stable-boy came across the turf, leading a good-looking, powerfully made chestnut mare. As soon as it came near, Scott nudged Carteret with his elbow, and at the same moment Carteret nudged Scott with his.

"Look," whispered Scott; "they have tried to paint out the blaze on her face and her two white stockings in front."

"Yes," said Mr. Carteret,—his eyes were very quick,—"and they have tried to sew up the notch in her ear."

The point of one ear was drawn together in an unnatural fashion, and close inspection showed that a piece was gone from the tip and the edges were sewed together. At short range the chestnut dye on the mare's face and

legs was apparent to eyes accustomed to horses.

"She 's very good-looking," observed Crewe to Miss Heminway.

"I like her," replied Miss Heminway.

"She 's devilish good-looking," put in Lamppie.

"The question is," said Miss Heminway, "will she jump? I don't want her to try anything high, but I should like to see her ridden over the bars at about three feet. Danny Foster," she continued, "is the only boy at the stable I let ride her, and he is away this afternoon, so that somebody with good hands will have to ride her for me."

There was a heavy silence.

Miss Heminway looked at Crewe.

"Won't you?" she said.

"Why," said Crewe, "I should be glad to, but I 'm ashamed to ride before Carty and Scott, who are distinctly the only men present with truly good hands. Besides, they are stopping in the house, and riding your horses is by right their—" he hesitated and then said—"privilege."

"I don't care," said Miss Heminway; "only somebody get up and ride."

No one made a move.

"Come, Carty," she said sharply, "ride the mare and stop this nonsense. You are coy as a girl asked to sing."

Carteret pulled his straw hat over his eyes and tapped his leg thoughtfully with his ratan stick. "Elizabeth," he said, "you are a superior woman, but you have missed it this time. In the first place, your Titian red is very badly put on, and your surgery on that ear is abominable; a seamstress could do better."

"What do you mean?" demanded Miss Heminway.

"Don't try to force a poor joke," said Mr. Carteret, severely.

Miss Heminway turned to Scott.

"Will you do me a small favor?" she said.

"Anything in the world," Scott answered, "except ride that mare." He laughed knowingly. A whisper ran through the group of onlookers, and then a laugh. Miss Heminway turned her back upon

both Scott and Carteret. Mr. Lamppie was standing before her.

"Mr. Lamppie," she said, "if *you* are not *afraid*, will you kindly show my mare over that jump?"

Lamppie bowed.

"I have only one good arm," he said, "and you know I am not considered much of a horseman by Carty and Scott, but I shall be truly happy to try."

He started for the horse, and at the same moment Scott and Carteret started too.

"Elizabeth," said Mr. Carteret, quietly, "you must n't let him ride that brute. His shoulder has only just healed."

"Please mind your own affairs," said Miss Heminway, severely.

Scott had rushed forward in the attempt to seize Lamppie before he was in the saddle; but, regardless of what was supposed to be his injured arm, he scrambled up, and kicking his heels into the mare, galloped off.

"Mr. Scott," called Miss Heminway, severely, "will you kindly *not* interfere with Mr. Lamppie?"

Scott turned and meekly rejoined Mr. Carteret.

"Look!" exclaimed Miss Heminway.

"I don't care to look," said Mr. Carteret. His back was turned to the horse. "I don't want to see a murder."

But Scott looked. He saw the chestnut mare carry Lamppie into the wings of the jump at an even canter, clear the bars in an easy manner, and come jogging back to the spectators.

There was a burst of applause.

"Has she killed him?" asked Mr. Carteret.

"Carty," said Scott, "it is all over with us."

Mr. Carteret turned around. Lamppie was bowing to Miss Heminway.

"Shall I take her over again?" he asked. "She goes like a sweet dream."

"If you will, please," replied Miss Heminway.

Mr. Carteret watched the mare and Lamppie repeat their performance. He lighted a cigarette and inhaled a long puff of smoke. "Lamppie wins by a block," he said softly.

"How do you suppose they did it?" said Scott.

Carteret's reply was interrupted by Lamppie. "I say, Carty," he called out, "don't you chaps want a turn on this mare? She's a lovely ride; nothing to be afraid of."

"I am very much obliged to you," said Mr. Carteret. "I'll not ride."

"Well," said Miss Heminway, sweetly, "if there are no more animals and things to be seen, we might go in and have tea."

The party went into the house, but Carteret and Scott disappeared. They went out a back door and proceeded to the stables.

It happened that Fredericks, Miss Heminway's head man, had formerly been employed by Mr. Carteret. Carteret had given him up much as an orchid-fancier might send a lady his choicest air-plant. When the two men entered the stable, Fredericks greeted them obsequiously. There was a queer look in his eyes, but he was very grave because Carteret was grave.

"Fredericks," said Mr. Carteret, "we want to see that mare."

"Very good, sir," said Fredericks, and he took them down the stable to a box-stall. He opened the doors and showed them the mare. A stable-boy was scrubbing her legs with some chemical preparation, and they were becoming white.

"This part of the job," said Carteret, pointing with his stick to the mare's legs, "you did very badly. I should like to know, however, how you got Isabella to go so kindly in so short a time. I consider that a very remarkable achievement, Fredericks."

"Thank you, sir," said Fredericks. He bowed very low, and his cap concealed his face, but it could not conceal the quivering of his large frame. "I beg pardon, sir," he gasped, and fled out of the stall, apparently in a convulsion.

"I am afraid," said Scott, "that if we were Fredericks we should feel as he does. I want to know, though, what he used."

Fredericks returned shortly, much mor-

tified and with many apologies for his breach of manners.

"I'm goin' to tell you, sir," he said, "if I lose me place. Come this way, sir."

He led them to another box-stall, which was at the end of the passage, opened the door, and stood aside for them to pass through. They entered the box, looked at the horse before them, and then at each other.

"Well," said Mr. Carteret, "it is easy when you know how."

They were in the presence of Isabella. In shape, size, and color the other mare was her counterpart; but that this only was Isabella they knew now by her eye, by her expression, and by her simplicity of character. She was trying to get her nose into Scott's pocket, and failing in that, she nipped his hand with her lips.

"She's too fat," said Scott. There was nothing else which occurred to him to say.

"So she is, sir," said Fredericks.

"No exercise," said Carteret; "the diplomats gave out."

"I was three weeks finding that other mare," said Fredericks. "She 's pretty near a match, sir."

"Did you cut the tip of her ear and then sew it up?" demanded Carteret.

"Not I, sir," said Fredericks. "No, sir. That was Miss Heminway's friend Dr. Anderson, the surgeon, sir. He did it with instruments and cocaine and surgeon's needles, sir, and Mr. Lamppie helped him, and held the cocaine-bottle."

"They all knew about it," said Mr. Carteret. "Thank you, Fredericks," he added; "we sha'n't tell on you."

They walked in silence back to the house. At the door Carteret spoke.

"I told you," he said, "that Elizabeth Heminway was a remarkable woman."

"You did," said Scott.

"I knew we ought not to come."

"You said that, too," said Scott.

"And you made me come," said Carteret.

"I did," Scott replied.

"Well," demanded Carteret, "what are you going to do about it?"

“What is there to do about it?” said Scott.

There was a long silence. Carteret tapped his leg thoughtfully with his ratan stick.

“What is there to do about it?” Scott said again.

Carteret made no answer, but opened the door and went in, and Scott followed.

CROWNINSHIELD'S BRUSH

III

CROWNINSHIELD'S BRUSH

MR. CROWNINSHIELD left his wife talking with the M. F. H. and walked his horse away from the hounds, for he had been cautioned that it kicked. In doing this he met Mrs. Palfrey, who was riding across the lawn in the other direction. They both stopped.

"I 'm glad to see you hunting," she said.

"You 're very good," said Crowninshield, dryly.

"And Juggernaut," Mrs. Palfrey continued; "how very fine he looks! Precisely the right flesh for hunting condition."

"Is this Juggernaut?" asked Crownin-

shield. "I did n't notice. Maria ordered it. Look out! He kicks."

"Oh, no! Juggy would n't kick, would he?" said Mrs. Palfrey, cheerfully, to the big black horse. "When we owned him," she went on to Crowninshield, "the only bad trick he had was sulking. He has a light mouth, and if you fuss it he 'll sulk. Pity, is n't it, when he 's such an unusual performer?"

Just then Juggernaut let fly at an inquisitive hound.

"Oh, naughty!" exclaimed Mrs. Palfrey.

Crowninshield gazed off toward the links.

"It 's a beautiful morning for golf," he said slowly.

Young Mr. Carhart, who had just joined them, looked at him with wonder and rode away.

"You must n't say such things," said Mrs. Palfrey. "The golf people are disagreeable enough without any encouragement. The first thing you know they 'll vote to give up the hounds."

"I wish they would," said Crowninshield. "This hunting bores me. I don't like it. I don't like to hurry, and I don't like jumping fences. I'm afraid.

"My wife," he continued, "is kind to dumb animals. She subscribes to an institution for homeless cats. She is a member of an anti-check-rein association. She gets me into the newspapers by stopping teamsters who beat their horses and making them promise to be gentle. Why, then," he demanded, "does she insist upon my hunting, when, if I were a tame ape or a racoon, my feelings would be respected and I could stop at home?"

"Well," observed Mrs. Palfrey, "Maria has n't confided in me, but she probably wants you to get over being afraid. I think I should feel that way about Willie. You see, one does n't expect quite so much from an ape. Crowny," she went on, "why don't you go hard a few times and thrust a little? Jump some fences that will make her anxious about you, and then you can retire."

"That might do," said Crowninshield,

"but suppose when I 'm thrusting I get rolled out, and have to spend my season of retirement on a water mattress? "

"Of course there 's that chance," said Mrs. Palfrey, cheerfully, "but Maria would make it up to you in devotion. She 'd feel in a measure responsible for the accident."

"Perhaps," said Crowninshield. The suggestion was apparently occupying his mind, and he said nothing more.

Presently the M. F. H. started down the road, with the hounds behind him, and Mrs. Crowninshield rode up.

"He 's going to draw the Benton woods," she said. "There 's a fox there. They saw it this morning and stopped the earth. Harrison," she observed to Mr. Crowninshield, "keep close to Donahue"—he was the first whip—"till we get out in the open. There 's a good deal of trappy country to the west of the woods, and Donahue knows it better than any one else."

"Thank you very much, Maria," said Crowninshield. "If you are in doubt

about the country you may follow Donahue or any one else, as you see fit. I intend to ride my own line."

Mrs. Crowninshield looked at her husband with surprise.

"You 've hurt his feelings," said Mrs. Palfrey, "and he 'll probably do something foolish and break his neck."

"I think I can trust his sober second thought," said Mrs. Crowninshield, but plainly she was a little worried. After a moment she rode up beside her husband. "Are you angry with me?" she asked meekly. She was a very pretty young woman, and when she looked meek she was especially pretty.

"No," he said.

"Then why don't you look pleasant and smile?" she asked.

"Maria," said Crowninshield, "you are a—" He stopped and looked at her sternly and rode ahead.

Mrs. Crowninshield turned to Mrs. Palfrey. "What ideas have you been putting in his head?" she demanded. "I don't want him to kill himself. I have been

trying to get him to like it, and to go along respectably. But now his temper is stirred up, and he may do something absurd."

She rode after him, but, as Mrs. Palfrey could see, he repelled her advances with a dignified silence.

The covert into which the hounds were taken was a big oblong wood lot, with a board fence across the farther end and wire fences on the other three sides. They went in through a gate which the farmer unlocked for them.

"This is a bad place to get out of," said the M. F. H. to the two ladies. "The hounds will probably work down toward the board fence, but we've got to go out over it whichever line the fox may take. We can't get over the wire."

He rode off and began casting through a bottom covered with tall dead weeds. As the first hound entered the undergrowth a fox scurried out and went away through the woods. "Gone away!" yelled the whips. In a moment the pack was on the line and gave tongue riotously, and fox, hounds, and horses were off. The field

crashed through the woods, down the steep banks of a little stream, up again, and on toward the board fence. Mrs. Crowninshield was riding Ten Pin, who was an excitable brute, and took hold pretty hard at the beginning of the day. She reached the boards among the first and went over. As she landed she looked back through the thick growth of saplings and saw Jugger-naut coming along. She pulled up as much as she could in the hope of seeing him jump, but her horse began going sidewise through a thicket, and made it impossible for her to look back. However, she listened, and heard no sound of broken boards, which indicated that Mr. Crowninshield was over without accident. Then Ten Pin put his head down and bored away for half a field, and this for the time being put Mr. Crowninshield out of her thoughts.

The fox was still in view, and the pace was as fast as the hounds could make it. There was every promise of an exceptionally good day. Presently the fox began to swing in a wide circle, and treated the hunt

to some of the biggest country in that part of the State. A new picket fence not much less than five feet high was followed by a stiff in-and-out across a narrow lane. Then there was a big rail fence with a ditch on the take-off side. The first whip went down at this, and those who got over had a grateful feeling toward the horses that were carrying them. At a stone wall the M. F. H.'s mount made a mistake, and the M. F. H. was left ignominiously chasing his horse and shouting "Whoa!" A series of stiff post-and-rail obstacles followed, which thinned out the field still more.

Ten Pin was still pulling, and Mrs. Crowninshield had not much opportunity to look around for her husband, though she thought about him several times. There was a man on a big black horse riding his own line half a field ahead of her and some distance to the right. She was somewhat near-sighted, and could not make out who the man might be, but her judgment told her that it was not Mr. Crowninshield, although the horse looked

like Juggernaut. "I don't think Juggernaut could hold this pace, even if Harrison wanted to," she added mentally, to assure herself.

They went at a line of new rails, and Ten Pin pecked badly, but she kept him up.

"Careful, there!" called the M. F. H., who had caught his horse and had come up, cheerful but out of breath. "Nice run, is n't it? It won't last much longer," he panted. "The fox is making for the woods where we found him. The pace is too hot. We ought to kill there. The earth is stopped; we've gone around in a circle."

"Have you seen Harrison?" Mrs. Crowninshield asked.

"No," said the M. F. H., "I have n't. I lost my glasses at the beginning, and you know I can't see much without them. I'm sure he's all right, though." The M. F. H. felt justified in his confidence by a long acquaintance with Mr. Crowninshield, and with his repugnance to all forms of violent exertion. "Look out ahead!" he added.

The hounds swung sharply to the left,

and disappeared in a piece of thick woods. The field followed over a rail fence, and the next minute encountered a thicket of wild-grape vines, which took young Carhart off his horse and made the others pull up to disentangle themselves. When they got into the open again the hounds were vanishing over the crest of a little hill.

"Hurry," called the M. F. H. to Mrs. Crowninshield, "or we shall lose them." She urged Ten Pin with the whip, and they swept up the hill with a handful, all that was left of the field, behind them. From the top they saw the tail hounds a field ahead going under the wire fence into the covert where they had found half an hour before, and a man on a black horse disappearing after them into the woods.

"Good Lord," exclaimed the M. F. H., "somebody 's jumped that barbed-wire fence! Who is it?"

"I don't know," Mrs. Crowninshield called back. "I can't make out." The black horse looked to her like Juggernaut, but she tried to put that idea out of her head. She was worried none the less.

Carhart was behind her, and she could not think of any one else absent-minded enough to jump barbed wire.

"We 'll have to go around to the other end where the boards are," called the M. F. H., and he used his spurs. "If the fox gets through the covert and breaks away again, perhaps we 'll make up our lost ground."

As they galloped along the edge of the covert they could faintly hear the hubbub of the hounds deep in the wood. Suddenly it stopped.

"They must have killed," said the M. F. H. He turned around the corner of the wood lot, straightened out his horse at the board fence, and went over. The others followed, and galloping through the woods they came upon the pack jumping excitedly about the figure of a man for a brown thing which he held high above them. When they came closer they could see that the man was Mr. Crowninshield. He was trying to keep off the hounds and to cut off the brush at the same time, which was a difficult thing to do.

"It was Harrison, after all," murmured Mrs. Crowninshield, and grew extremely white.

When Crowninshield saw the M. F. H., he paused with the knife in one hand and the fox's corpse in the other. "I suppose I ought not to be cutting this creature up," he said. "Does n't it violate hunting etiquette? But the proper official was n't on hand." He smiled blandly.

The M. F. H. said nothing. He was getting his breath and taking in the situation. Besides, there was nothing to say.

Just then Carhart rode up and regarded Crowninshield solemnly for several moments. Then he dismounted, went over to him, and held out his hand. "You go too hard for me," he said.

"It was luck," said Crowninshield, modestly.

But Carhart shook his head and turned away. He was deeply impressed.

While Carhart was paying this tribute to Crowninshield, his wife recovered from her agitation, and began examining Jugger-naut's legs for traces of barbed wire. Her

inspection proved that the horse had escaped without a scratch. "He always was such a clean performer," she murmured. Suddenly a look of wonder came into her face. She went close to the horse and put her hand upon its neck. Then she turned toward Crowninshield and regarded him curiously.

In the meantime the M. F. H. had got his breath.

"I'm going to give your husband," said he, "a short lecture on fox-hunting. Crowny," he went on, drawing up alongside of Mr. Crowninshield, "you've won the right to membership in the idiots' club, of which Carhart is the president. But don't jump any more wire fences, particularly after half an hour's hard galloping. A gentleman should have some regard for his horse. Besides, we don't want to stop hunting to attend funerals."

"All right," said Crowninshield; "I will reform," and a twinkle came into his eye. "I say," he added, "how about this brush?"

"No one ever won a brush more hon-

estly," said the M. F. H. Then he turned away and began calling the hounds.

One by one the field straggled in and heard about Crowninshield's exploit and congratulated him. He bore it with modesty and composure.

"Are n't you a little proud of him?" asked Mrs. Palfrey of Mrs. Crowninshield.

Mrs. Crowninshield nodded, but suppressed her pride admirably.

"I am going to confess," Mrs. Palfrey continued, "that I suggested to Harrison that he should try going a bit hard. I knew he would enjoy it more if he did. But I really did n't expect him to do this."

"Really?" said Mrs. Crowninshield, coldly; and Mrs. Palfrey moved away and joined Carhart.

"Maria does n't know exactly what to make of it," she whispered.

"No," said Carhart; "very curious that he should never have let himself out before."

"It is," said Mrs. Palfrey. "There go the hounds," she added, and they followed them out to the road.

Most of the field went back to the club, where they lunched together in their riding things, an occasion which took the form of an ovation to Crowninshield. They toasted him and congratulated him, and he charmed them with the sincere modesty with which he deprecated his exploit. Finally they called upon him for a speech.

"Tell us how, being a mere golfer," said the M. F. H., "you happened to do it."

"I will," said Crowninshield. He rose to his feet and produced the brush from his coat pocket. "The principle which I employed in obtaining this coveted trophy is the one laid down by Napoleon as the first rule of war, 'Be at the right place at the right time.'"

There were cries of "Good!" from McMillan, who had been lunching heartily upon liquids and was somewhat overappreciative.

"But how did you happen to be there?" asked the M. F. H. "How did you get over that wire fence?"

There was a pause, and Crowninshield smiled modestly.

"I did n't get over it," he said. "*I was there. I was there all the time!*"

"Most extraordinary!" gasped McMillan, and became hysterical.

"Go on," said the M. F. H., when he could be heard.

"It was very simple," said Crowninshield. "Juggernaut balked at that first board fence, and I could n't get him out of the field. I must have fussed his mouth and his disposition. The gate was locked and the farmer who had the key was following the hunt in a buggy. So I had to wait. In about half an hour the hounds came along and I joined in."

"Crowninshield," said the M. F. H., with the first voice that he could command, "you have made this a happy day. You are entitled to your brush."

Crowninshield bowed and beat a retreat to the smoking-room. He had not been there very long before a servant told him that Mrs. Crowninshield had ordered the trap and was ready to go home.

"All right," said Crowninshield. He rose at once, which was not his custom,

throwing his cigar into the fire. The fact was that he was uneasy about facing Mrs. Crowninshield alone, she took hunting so seriously. He would have been as well pleased to have her drive home by herself and send the cart back for him.

As they drove away from the club mechanically she took the reins, and then, as if recollecting herself, she gave them to her husband. "You drive," she said.

He looked puzzled, for she usually drove, but he did as she asked.

"Well," he said seriously, after a long pause, "I suppose you're ashamed of me?"

She shook her head and smiled. "No," she answered.

Crowninshield looked at her curiously. Her lip quivered a little. "Did n't you think better of me," he asked, "when you believed that I had jumped that wire fence?"

"No," she said. "Because"—she hesitated a moment—"I knew you had n't jumped it."

He looked her in the face. "You knew it?" he said slowly. "How?"

"Yes," she answered. "You see, the other horses were wet, and Juggernaut had n't turned a hair."

There was a long pause.

"Suppose I had n't told?" he suggested in a low voice.

She reached out her hand and placed it upon his knee. "But you did," she said.

TING-A-LING

IV

TING-A-LING

THEY were sitting on the balcony which distinguished the bridal suite, in the sun of the June morning. Below was the main street, animated mildly with the shopping of a dormant New England community. A few ancient carriages, reliquaries of the first families, mingled with the buggies and the delivery-wagons, and at dignified intervals a horse-car jingled past and disappeared in the vista of elms.

"It's ten minutes past eleven," he observed, looking at his watch. "We have five hours to wait for the four-ten train, but I believe we *dine* at twelve."

"Are you hungry?" she asked. "I

dare say we could get something even before dinner — perhaps a pie.”

They both laughed. “This is an awful place,” he said, “is n’t it? No more historic New England for me.”

They leaned lazily upon the balcony rail, and sat with their heads together, looking down into the street. A grocer’s clerk was putting things into a wagon, and they wondered who was going to have asparagus, and how big a family it might be which needed six quarts of strawberries. Presently, with the noises of the street, came the jingling of the periodic horse-car, and they turned and watched it approach.

“That is not a bad-looking horse,” he said judicially.

“Look!” she exclaimed. There was a note of pity and indignation in her voice. The car, as it drew near, appeared to bulge with passengers.

“It’s rather a joke,” he said. “Those are women delegates to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals convention.”

"It 's shameful," she said.

The car stopped on the corner in front of the hotel for another passenger to worm himself into the jam on the rear platform. The horse, a big, showy chestnut, stood panting, his nostrils red and dilated. His neck was white with lather. Wet streaks extended up his ears. His body dripped, and the sweat was running down his legs.

As the two strokes of the conductor's bell gave the signal to start, he plunged forward almost before the driver had loosened the brakes. There was a clatter of hoofs on the cobblestones, and a mighty straining. The heavy car began to move, and the chestnut horse went trotting down the street, tail up and neck arched like a cavalry horse on parade.

"He 's game," he said.

She put her hand on his arm. "I can't bear to see it," she whispered.

He looked down at her. Her eyes were brimming.

"Don't be a little goose," he said gently; but there was a queer feeling in his throat. He rose to his feet. "I'll be

back in a few minutes," he added. "I want to go down to the office." He bent down and kissed her, and left the balcony.

She waited half an hour, and then went down to the corridor. He was not at the office. She decided to go out. As she was on the hotel steps, she met him coming in, and at the same moment a coach-horn sounded, and they saw a coach and four come around the corner.

He looked back. "O Lord!" he exclaimed, "we 're caught. There 's your brother, and the Appleton girls, and Frank Crewe, and Winthrop, and most of your bridesmaids. I suppose they are on their way to Lenox."

"What shall we do?" she asked.

A great uproar arose from the people on the coach.

"Hello!" said Curtis.

"Hello!" yelled the people on the coach. Mr. Crewe got possession of the horn and produced fragments of the "Lo-hengrin Wedding March." The people in the street and the hangers-on about the hotel began to gather around.

Her brother waved his hand from the coach. "Well," he said, "how are you getting on? Quarreled yet? I am sorry, but we are completely out of rice."

"I don't understand," said Curtis, looking at the crowd in dismay. "This is a beautiful country, Willie. Historic battlefields and all that sort of thing; besides, they breed some good horses all about here. We have been picking up one or two."

"For the bride!" called Winthrop, and he generously threw her an enormous bunch of wild roses which Crewe that morning had patiently pulled from the roadside bushes at the cost of no small suffering, and had presented to the elder Appleton girl.

Curtis ignored the episode. His eye at that moment caught a stable-boy leading a big chestnut horse toward the hotel. "Here's one we've just bought," he said. "I think he's likely to make a jumper." He felt his hand, which was behind him, squeezed surreptitiously, and he was aware of beaming somewhat foolishly. He was

glad that the people on the coach had turned their attention to the horse.

"Where did you find that?" asked Winthrop.

Curtis hesitated a moment. "Over that way," he said vaguely, waving his hand over an arc which extended from east to west. "It 's a great country for horses."

Her brother had been inspecting the horse in silence. "My son," he said to the stable-boy, "how did you gall that race-horse's shoulder?"

"That 's a collar-mark," said the boy. "Pulling a street-car is hard work."

Peals of laughter came from the coach.

"You need n't laugh," said the boy. "He 's a horse all right."

She had moved to the horse's head. "I believe you," she said to the boy. "He 's game."

"He is, ma'am," said the boy.

"Well, Ting-a-ling," said her brother, addressing the chestnut horse, "we can't stop to admire you all day. "You 're not a bad-looking horse, but if you are a street-car horse, as unfortunately you are,

you have the nature that will jump until you get tired, and then you 'll roll over things, and make my sister an attractive widow. I would n't have you at any price."

"Then everybody is satisfied," said Curtis.

"I am," she said. She gave him a little look that meant that she was satisfied with him, and Curtis felt that he was beaming again. He turned away.

The horse began to rub his nose against her arm and sniffed.

"He's looking for sugar," said the boy.
"I give it to him sometimes."

"You are a very nice boy," she said.
"What's your name?"

"Tim," said the boy.

"Let's have him take the horse down for us," she said to her husband. "We might keep him, too."

"All right," he said. "But let's get out of this crowd." They slipped away and hurried around the block.

"You were good to get him," she said in a low tone. "The way he acted made

me feel that he was n't meant for street-car work. What shall we call him?"

"I am afraid that brother Willie has already named him," he answered.

"What?" she demanded.

"Ting-a-ling," he replied.

"But he ought to be called Sultan or Emperor, or something like that," she insisted.

"You and I," he said, "we know what a heart he has; but, after all, he *is* a street-car horse. We 'd better accept the facts."

"Well, then it 's Ting-a-ling," she said.

IT was November; three years had slipped away. The race for the Hunt Club cup was coming off in the afternoon, and everybody was lunching at the club. She was patiently chaperoning the elder Appleton girl and Frank Crewe at a table on the glass-closed veranda overlooking the polo-field.

"We 'll give you some lunch," she said to Winthrop, who was passing.

"I 'm with Willie," he answered.

"Willie can come too," she said.

He thanked her and sat down.

"Is Ting-a-ling pretty fit?" he asked.

"I think so," she replied; "but of course he 's never been steeplechased, so we don't know what he can do."

"He is certainly a good horse to hounds," said Winthrop.

"He 's never been down," she said.

"Please don't say that on the day of the race," he interrupted; "it's unlucky."

Just then Willie joined them.

"Still talking steeplechase," he observed. "I suppose your husband is going to win."

"I don't know about that," she answered; "but he 'll beat you."

"I 'll bet he won't," he retorted. "It's a sure thing. I am not going to ride. They tell me that I am too fat, but that is n't the reason. I am afraid. Hello! here 's the steeplechase jockey," he said to Curtis, who came in. "Have you provided liberally for me in your will? Have n't I always been a good brother-in-law?"

"Always," said Curtis, "and no doubt

you need the money ; but I am not making wills to-day."

" You 'd better," said Willie, cheerfully. " I 'd hate to have that street-car horse roll you out and have no other consolation than the thought that you had loved me." His tone became less playful. " Bequeath me my nephew, and your widow can take the property."

" If that blessed boy of yours," Crewe said to Mrs. Curtis, " is n't ruined by the indulgence of his foolish old uncle, I shall be much surprised."

" *Taisez-vous!*" retorted Willie, " and get a nephew of your own."

Winthrop turned to Curtis. " How has the horse shown in his training? " he asked.

" He rates pretty well, and I have a good deal of confidence in his jumping," Curtis answered. " He 's rather a pet, you know, so that perhaps my judgment is prejudiced."

" He 'll go until he gets tired," put in Willie, " and then he 'll shut up and go through his fences. Those big half-breds are all alike."

"How do you know he's a half-bred?" said Curtis.

"I don't know that he is anything," Willie retorted. "You got him out of a street-car."

"I think we would better change the subject," said his sister; "you're becoming disagreeable. Remember," she added to the party, "you are all coming in this evening to play bridge. You can't come to dinner, because the cook is sick."

FROM the hill back of the club-house they watched the race. A horse of Winthrop's, with Crewe up, made the running for the first mile. Then Curtis took Ting-a-ling out of the bunch, and went away apparently without effort. At the two-mile flag Curtis was a hundred yards in the lead. The other horses seemed to be racing for the place.

"He seems to have things all his own way," said Winthrop to Mrs. Curtis. "My horse is done."

"He *is* going well," she whispered. She was very much excited.

Toward the middle of the third mile the four horses that were running in the second flight drew up, and it became a race again. Her heart almost stopped beating. "Is he tiring?" she murmured. The five went at the board fence near the third-mile flag in a bunch. As they took off, there was crowding on the outside. Then four horses jumped cleanly; one fell, and the four went on again.

A rustle of apprehension ran through the crowd.

"Who 's down?" exclaimed the elder Appleton girl in a low tone.

"Is he hurt?" said her sister.

"It 's Ting-a-ling!" murmured Mrs. Curtis.

The horse got up, and galloped riderless after the leaders. A moment later the rider got up and started across the field on foot.

"He 's not hurt," said Winthrop. "I 'm awful sorry. He would have won."

"That 's good of you," she replied. But she suspected that he was only softening the bitterness of the disappointment.

Willie was right. The horse ran himself tired and stopped. She felt that she was very white and made an effort to talk. "That 's your horse ahead with Frank Crewe," she said; "he 's got the race."

It was so, and the crowd was already surging down to the finish-flags to congratulate the winner. Mrs. Curtis drove her cart across the meadow to meet the dismounted rider.

Their eyes met as she pulled up.

"It 's too bad," she said. "Are you hurt?"

"I think my collar-bone is gone," he answered. "I 'll see Tim and send the horse home, and then I 'll go to the club and get bandaged."

He gave his orders to the boy.

"You was fouled, sir," said Tim. He was much excited. "I seen Mr. Crewe pull across you about two lengths from the fence."

"Not at all," said Curtis, shortly. "Walk him home at once and do him up."

"Is it so?" she asked. "Were you fouled?"

"I don't think I'd say it," he answered. "I rode very badly. It was my fault. I should n't have pulled back into the crowd."

She said nothing. She saw that he was very much disappointed. But the hardest for her to bear was that her confidence in Ting-a-ling was gone.

At the club-house Willie was on the veranda.

"I am awfully sorry," he said. "But, seriously, you had better shoot that horse. You 'll not be so lucky another time."

Curtis looked up angrily to reply, and then turned away with his lips tightly closed.

"I 'll be ready in half an hour," he said to his wife.

In rather less than that time he came from his dressing-room, his arm in bandages and the hand in a sling. He sent for his trap, and found Mrs. Curtis in the tea-room.

"I think we had better go," he said. "They have just telephoned from the house, saying the baby is n't very well. I

told the doctor to come along as soon as he could. Don't say anything to Willie about the little chap," he added. "He'll tag along and make a fuss and irritate me."

She rose and followed him. The trap was at the door, and they drove away.

Earlier, the November afternoon had been flooded with a damp sunshine, and there had been a still and unnatural mildness in the air. Toward four, as they left the club, the sky became overcast, and out of the west a mass of blue-black cloud began to rise and stretch across the horizon. Soon it threw the western part of the plain and the hills beyond into darkness. Overhead it was still light, but the shadow drew on and began to chill the day.

Curtis looked apprehensively toward the west and touched the horse with the whip. His wife had the reins.

"It's growing colder," she said.

He bent forward and tucked the robe about her feet.

Uncertain drafts of wind rattled the

brown leaves on the oaks and made the dead goldenrods along the roadside bow excitedly.

"I am afraid that we are going to get wet," he said.

The gusts became stronger. The blackness from the west had spread until it was overhead, and light clouds were moving eastwardly across the face of the sky.

"I felt a drop of rain," she observed.

He urged the horse to a gallop.

"So did I," said he a moment later.

"It will be a good night to stay at home and read," he went on. "Don't you think I am getting to be quite a reader? Two books already this month; one of them had three hundred and twelve pages. But there were a good many pictures," he added conscientiously.

She smiled, but said nothing.

He watched her as they drove along. Presently he broke the silence.

"I would n't worry about the baby," he said. "Probably he has a little cold or a stomach-ache. The nurse is terrified if he sneezes."

"That 's probably all," she said; "you know what a goose I am."

As they turned into the driveway the rain began to pour down. Under the porte-cochère she got out of the trap and went in while he held the horse.

Presently a man came from the stable, and he too went in. He was taking off his coat when his wife came down from the nursery.

"Well?" he asked.

"He 's about the same," she answered. "He seems to have a little fever. What time did the doctor say he would be here?"

"About six," said Curtis. He looked at his watch. "It will be an hour yet. It 's begun to snow," he added.

They went to the library, which looked toward the west, and watched the breaking storm.

"It was too bad about Ting-a-ling," she said after a pause.

"Well," he answered, "we have to take things as they come. I should like to have shown what a horse he is. We shall next year."

"I wish you would promise never to ride him in a race again," she said.

"I don't think you ought to ask that," he answered sharply. "For the horse's sake, I want him to have a chance to redeem himself. Don't you?"

"Is n't it wrong to take unnecessary risks?" she replied.

He made no answer.

The rain had changed to sleet, and the ground was already white. The bare elms on the lawn were creaking dismally. They could see the stiff shrubs in the garden bend to the gusts. The storm beat on the window-panes, and in the fierce blasts the house trembled. As they stood by the window, the man brought in the lighted lamps, and they realized that the night had set in.

"Suppose we have a look at him," he said. By "him" he meant Ting-a-ling. "Won't you come? If the doctor arrives, they can send for us."

"I 'd like to," she said.

On the way out, she went to the pantry and took some lumps of sugar.

The stable servants were at supper, and the stable was still except for the sound of the horses munching at their oats. As he drew the door open the grinding hushed except in the two stalls where the phaëton ponies ate stolidly on. The line of dusky heads was lifted and thrust curiously forward. From the box-stall in the corner came a low whinny, and in the dim light of the wall lamp they saw a long neck stretched out and two pointed ears cocked forward. It was Ting-a-ling.

"You beggar!" said Curtis. "You know what we've got." He went into the stall and stripped off the blankets. She followed him. "Hello!" he exclaimed. His arm was nipped gently. "You have very bad manners." The horse drew back, tossed his head, and pawed.

"Look here," Mrs. Curtis said. She held out a piece of sugar. A soft muzzle touched her hand, the lips opened and scraped across her palm, and there was a crunching sound.

"You baby!" she said, and gave him a second piece. "I'm very fond of you,"

she added under her breath, "in spite—" She stopped.

"He seems to be feeding well," said Curtis.

He put his hand into the manger. It touched the clean, moistened boards of the bottom.

"You're a pig!" he exclaimed. "He's put away five quarts already," he said to his wife. "Does n't he look fit?"

They drew back and looked the horse over. The legs were clean, the great muscles stood out on forearm and quarter, the flesh was hard and spare.

"He's a great type," said Curtis, "is n't he? But if he were three-cornered I'd like him just as well. I'm ashamed to care so much for him."

"Do you remember the day we got him?" she asked.

He stepped back and put his arm around her.

"It seems yesterday, dear," he said. "How the years go by!" He put back the blankets, and stood a moment fastening the surcingle.

“Barring accidents, old horse,” he muttered, “we ’ll have your name on the cup yet.”

A swelling feeling came into his throat, and he put his face against the sleek neck. He straightened up quickly as he heard the doors slide apart and somebody come in.

“Mr. Curtis,” called a voice. It was Tim.

“Hello!” said Curtis.

“The doctor ’s come,” said Tim.

“All right,” answered Curtis.

He drew his wife’s wraps about her, and they made their way back to the house.

The doctor met them at the door of the nursery.

“This child is sick,” he said. “The temperature has gone up in a way I don’t like. We ’ve got to operate.”

“Operate!” Curtis exclaimed. He put his hand upon the banister. “What do you mean?”

“Yes,” said the doctor.

“When?” said Mrs. Curtis.

"Lamplight is bad," said the doctor, "but we must do the best we can. It ought to be done before ten o'clock. I should be afraid to wait longer."

Neither husband nor wife spoke. The doctor looked at his watch.

"Whom would you rather have?" he asked.

"Have?" repeated Curtis. A gust rattled the windows at the end of the hall, and as it died away he heard the *tick-tick* of the sleet on the pane. He looked at the doctor with a white face.

"Can't *you* do it?" he asked. "Suppose we could n't get any one from town by ten o'clock?"

"We must," said the doctor, cheerfully. "I'm not a surgeon, and there is none in the village. Would you rather have Anderson, or Tate?"

"Dr. Anderson," said Mrs. Curtis.

"He must get the train that leaves town at eight o'clock," said the doctor. "There is no other until midnight."

"It's a quarter past six now," said Curtis. "That gives us an hour and

three quarters. I 'll telephone at once." He left the room and went to the telephone.

After some delay the village operator answered.

"You can't get the city," said the girl; "the wires are down. I have been trying to get them for an hour for the telegraph people. Their line is closed, too."

"When do you expect your wires to be repaired?" he asked.

"Can't say," the operator replied. "Not to-night, though. The linemen can't work to-night."

"Thank you," said Curtis. He hung up the receiver and stood blankly before the instrument. He was about to move away when he heard a footstep. He turned, and his wife was standing beside him.

"He 'll come, won't he?" she said.

He put a cigarette in his mouth and struck a match.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked.

"Won't he come?"

"He 'll come," he answered. "I'm going

to the station for him myself. I'll dine when I come back. You and the doctor get the things ready." He went into the smoking-room and walked the length of the room and back. "Six miles, ten, fifteen, and six more down-town," he said aloud. He looked at his watch again. It was twenty minutes past six. "Start at half-past," he went on; "that's twenty-one miles in an hour and a quarter—and these roads!" He went to the wall and rang a bell. "Twenty-one miles in an hour and a quarter," he repeated. "Searchlight can't do it, nor Xerxes, nor Huron, nor the roan mare."

A servant appeared.

"Tell Hobson," he said, "to saddle Ting-a-ling at once. Tell him to hurry, and send Tim here."

Tim came, and Curtis explained.

"Can he do it?" asked Curtis.

"I don't know, sir," said the boy.

"He's got to do it," said Curtis. "Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

They hurried to the stable, and found Hobson buckling the throat-latch.

"All ready, sir," he said.

Tim climbed into the saddle and gathered up his reins. Then Hobson threw open the door, and the horse and boy clattered out and disappeared in the storm.

Curtis looked at his watch. It was twenty-eight minutes past six. "Have the bus and a pair at the house at eight," he said, and went back to the house.

He met his wife in the hall.

"Is there any change?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Suppose he should miss the train?" she suggested.

"He won't," said Curtis.

She sighed, and was silent for a pause. "What a wonderful thing the telephone is!" she said. "What would we have done without it?"

"That 's so," said Curtis. "I 'm going to the station at eight," he added.

AT ten minutes of nine she was standing with her face against the window-pane, when the lights of the station bus in the driveway glimmered through the storm.

She went to the head of the stairway and waited breathless.

"Suppose," she thought, "he has missed the train!"

Presently there sounded the crunching of wheels on the gravel under the portecochère. This meant that the bus was stopping at the house. Then the door opened.

"Come along," said her husband's voice.

"Thank God!" she murmured. She sat down for a moment, and then went to the nursery, which had been made into a hospital.

There was the tramp of ascending feet on the stairs, and then the surgeon and the village doctor came in and asked her to leave the room.

It seemed a long time, but it was only half an hour, when Dr. Anderson came out.

"It's all right," he said.

"What are the chances?" she asked.

"There are n't any," he replied; "that is, perhaps only one in a million—"

She looked alarmed.

"Of anything unpleasant happening," he went on. "We got it just in time. Your son is better off than other boys who wear their appendices. His is in a bottle."

The door-bell sounded faintly from the rear of the house, and they both listened. A moment later the front door opened, and she heard voices in the lower hall.

"They're a lot of people who've come in to play bridge. I'd forgotten about them," she said. "Will you tell them I'll be down presently?"

She went into the nursery, and Dr. Anderson went down-stairs.

When she came down she found them in the dining-room, watching the surgeon and Curtis eating supper, and asking them questions about the operation.

Her eyes caught Willie's. He was quiet and white. He drew a chair for her, and she sat down next him. She put her hand in his.

"It's all right," she said.

"It was an awfully close shave," he whispered.

"Yes, it was," she answered.

She turned to Dr. Anderson. "You were good to come," she said. "What would we have done if you had n't been at home when Mr. Curtis telephoned?"

"Telephoned?" he repeated.

Curtis got up and went to the sideboard for a whisky-decanter.

"Yes, telephoned," she said.

The surgeon looked at Curtis.

"Mary," said Curtis, "the telephone wires were down. Tim went to town for the doctor."

She looked around in amazement.

"But we did n't know till nearly half-past six," she exclaimed. She turned to Dr. Anderson. "You caught the eight-o'clock train. How did Tim go?"

"On horseback," said Curtis.

"But that's twenty miles!" said Willie.

"Twenty-one," said Curtis; "he went in an hour and a quarter."

There was a silence for a moment. Then she spoke.

"What horse did he ride?" she demanded.

"What horse have we that could have done it?" replied Curtis.

She looked at him for a moment in apprehension. "Is he all right?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Curtis. "Tim came back by train."

"Send for Tim," she said to the butler.

Tim came, and stood fumbling with his cap, which was soggy with melted snow.

"Were n't you frozen?" she asked.

"No, ma'am," the boy answered.

"Tell me about it," she said.

"Tell about it?" repeated the boy. "Why, ma'am—" He grew confused and stopped.

"But tell me—" she hesitated, and her lip trembled—"tell me how Ting-a-ling is."

The boy made no answer, but looked toward the surgeon.

She turned to Dr. Anderson. "What is it?" she demanded.

"I was starting out to dine," said the surgeon, "when a policeman came to the door and said there was a sick horse on

the corner, and a boy with him who wanted to see me. I went and found them both there."

"Well?" said Mrs. Curtis.

"Well," said the doctor, "as I reached the corner the cross-town trolley-car was letting off a passenger. When the bell rang to start, the horse in the street lifted his head, scrambled to his feet, staggered a step forward, and came down again. He was dead."

There was a stillness in the room, and the crying of a sick baby sounded faintly from up-stairs. Presently it ceased. For an instant the wife's eyes met those of her husband. Then resting her elbows on the table, she hid her face in her hands.

"God forgive me!" they heard Willie murmur in a queer voice. "That *was* a horse!"

"A street-car horse," said Curtis, gently.

No one spoke again, but each rose and left the dining-room.

THE BRAYBROOKE BABY'S
GODMOTHER

V

THE BRAYBROOKE BABY'S GODMOTHER

THE bishop put on his glasses and wandered down the car, consulting a ticket and examining the numbers on the revolving-chairs.

"Good morning," said a voice.

He looked down and saw Miss Henrietta Cushing.

"Why, how do you do?" said the bishop, smiling. "This *is* a pleasant surprise." He held up his ticket hopelessly. "Can you help me?" he asked. "I can't make out this number. It might be a nine or a seven or a six."

"Pay no attention to the number," said Miss Cushing; "if the officers of this railway cannot write legibly they must take

the consequences. Sit down next to me, and I shall not permit them to turn you out."

"I shall do that," said the bishop, gratefully, and he sat down.

Miss Cushing lived a few doors from the bishop in Gramercy Park, and they were old friends as well as neighbors. She was a little woman. Her hair, parted in the middle and drawn smoothly down in the fashion of another generation, was streaked with gray; but it was thick, and her brow was smooth, her gray eyes were bright, and there was a tinge of pink in her cheeks. She was dressed simply in black, but her clothes were very well made, as women observed, and there was always a remarkable piece of lace about her neck. She was rich even for these days.

Miss Cushing was cousin to most of the distinguished New-Yorkers of the days before the plutocracy, but she had no immediate family, and she lived by herself in seclusion. Like many women who have never married, she had elaborate theories in regard to the discipline and

bringing up of young children, and spoiled all those with whom she came into contact by a too indulgent tenderness. Her liking for babies amounted to a passion, and she gave large sums secretly to charities of which infants were the beneficiaries. Her dominant feeling, however, was her sympathy for the sufferings of defenseless animals. She gave not only her money for this cause, but her time also, and served on the executive committee of the council of the society. The bishop settled himself in the chair next to Miss Cushing and relaxed his great frame. A sigh of relief and comfort escaped him.

"I hurried," he said; "I was afraid that I was going to be late."

"Are you on pleasure bent," asked Miss Cushing, "or is this work?"

"There are some duties," replied the bishop, "which are so pleasant as to escape from the category of work by their very nature. It is one of these which is taking me to Oakdale. You see—" he continued, but Miss Cushing interrupted him.

“Oakdale!” she exclaimed. “It must be a great trial and mortification to you to have that place in your diocese.” She looked at him with eyes full of sympathy.

“Why?” said the bishop.

“Why?” repeated Miss Cushing. “Have you never been there? Have you never heard of their practices?”

“Practices?” said the bishop.

“Yes,” said Miss Cushing; “barbarous practices.”

The bishop looked perplexed. “I have been there,” he said; “I have been there a good deal. At first the interest in horses and sport rather astonished me,—it is a hunting community,—but—” the bishop hesitated.

“Exactly,” said Miss Cushing, showing a gleam of white teeth and then closing her lips very tight; “a fox-hunting community. You are a bishop, and you have been the president of a fellow-society to ours. Do you think it humane or Christian,” she continued, “to pursue God’s defenseless creatures for hours, yes, for days, till they fall exhausted in the mouths of ravening hounds?”

The bishop looked thoughtfully at Miss Cushing. "Do they do that?" he asked. "Are you sure of your facts?"

"Oh, quite," she replied. She opened a little bag and produced a roll of newspaper clippings inclosed in an elastic band. Removing the band, she flattened out the slips and arranged them for reference.

"Here," she began, "is the interview with a veteran fox-chaser in which he tells about a dog which chased a fox for five days and nights. What do you think of a man who would boast of such a deed?"

"I should think," answered the bishop, slowly, "that he was a liar."

"Quite so," said Miss Cushing, who did not catch the bishop's meaning. "He must be thoroughly depraved."

"But this account," said the bishop, "refers to the South. I am sure that at Oakdale the hunts last but a few hours, and I recall some one telling me that the only fox which they have killed in three years they happened on in a farmer's poultry-yard as they were coming home."

"They have deceived you," said Miss Cushing. "It is very natural. Look!"

she continued. She held out a dozen short clippings. "These are recent accounts of the hunts at Oakdale, not the South. In each one it mentions by name the persons who were '*in at the death.*' The death, you understand, means the death of the fox." She selected a clipping and began to read. It concluded: "'The hounds finished at Smith's Corners. At the death were—'" Miss Cushing stopped as she read the first name, a woman's. "I suppose you know who that is?" she said to the bishop. "What would Tilly say if she knew that her daughter had married into that set, and was watching the death-agonies of a creature that never did any one harm? Our work in the streets and slums is difficult enough as it is; but when the daughters of one's friends are offenders too, it is somewhat discouraging."

"Yes," said the bishop; "your work is not only a good but a difficult one. However," he added, "I believe that the expression '*in at the death*' must be used figuratively, because I have heard that all

last spring the club hunted nothing but drags."

Miss Cushing looked at him in surprise.

"That is exactly what the club wrote to our secretary!" she exclaimed. "And what pained me very much was that the letter was signed by young James Braybrooke. You know," she added, "that his mother, till her death, was my dear friend."

"Well," said the bishop, somewhat sharply, "why should you be pained by the fact that *he* signed the letter? It said that they had been hunting a drag, just as I told you."

Miss Cushing looked at the bishop in amazement. "Bishop Cunningham," she exclaimed, "your course is a matter for your own conscience, but I shall never consent to make flesh of one and fish of another. While I am in the council, our society shall protect drags as well as foxes."

"Drags as well as foxes?" repeated the bishop.

"Yes," said Miss Cushing, with emphasis.

The bishop looked at her, utterly at a loss. Then a light broke upon him and his face softened.

"Ah, yes," he said mildly; "do you know what a drag is?"

"It is a small creature," Miss Cushing replied. "I have never seen one, as I disapprove of menageries; but I presume that it belongs to the fox family."

"You say that you have never seen one?" observed the bishop.

"Yes," said Miss Cushing; "I have never seen one, but that is not a reason why our society should suffer them to be tortured. It is high time that a stand was taken, when people of our class amuse themselves with cruelty to drags. And I am going to Oakdale to investigate the matter myself and bring the offenders to justice."

"Good!" said the bishop. Then he seized his newspaper and disappeared behind it till a fit of violent coughing should pass away. His massive body shook and Miss Cushing became alarmed. She called the porter. "Bring some water to Bishop Cunningham," she said.

Before the water arrived the bishop had recovered.

"I beg your pardon very humbly," he said; "these attacks come on, and there seems no way of stopping them."

"There is a troche," she said, "which is admirable for bronchial irritation; I cannot recall the name, but I shall send you a package."

"You are very good to me," said the bishop. He wiped his eye-glasses with his handkerchief and settled himself. "So that is your errand to Oakdale?" he began, the corners of his mouth twitching anew.

"Is it coming on again?" inquired Miss Cushing, anxiously.

"I don't think so," said the bishop. He cleared his throat and shut his mouth with a grim expression. Then he turned to his newspaper again. "I'll glance at the morning news," he said, "if you will excuse me."

When the train stopped at Oakdale, the bishop helped Miss Cushing to the station platform, and spoke to a liveried servant who was waiting there to take his bag.

"The trap will drive up, sir," said the man, "as soon as the train pulls out." He said this as he noticed Miss Cushing apparently looking about for a vehicle.

"Are there no cabs here?" asked Miss Cushing, in a tone of surprise.

"No, madam," said the man.

"Have n't you arranged for some one to meet you?" asked the bishop. "You see, the village is two miles farther on, and nobody gets off here except people who are going over toward the club, and those usually arrange to be met."

"Dear me!" said Miss Cushing. "I wonder what I shall do."

"Oh," said the bishop, "you will come over with me."

"That is very kind of you," said Miss Cushing, "and in the circumstances I am afraid that I shall have to trespass upon your kindness."

As the train moved away, a smart-looking pair of horses and a two-seated trap came up to the platform.

"Here we are," said the bishop, gaily, and he helped Miss Cushing in. "This is

much better than a cab, and if we are not run away with or shied into a ditch, we shall arrive at the club in half the time in which a livery vehicle would have taken us."

"Yes," said Miss Cushing, "it really has turned out very well."

Just then the footman turned around and spoke to the bishop.

"I beg your pardon, sir; I forgot to tell you that Mr. Braybrooke sent his apologies for not meeting you himself, but there was an unexpected party of gentlemen—" Here the off horse shied at something invisible to man, and nearly succeeded in crowding the near one over a culvert. The footman's attention was occupied in holding on, and when the danger had been averted he had no opportunity for continuing.

"Mr. Braybrooke!" exclaimed Miss Cushing to the bishop. "Are these James Braybrooke's horses? Am I riding in his carriage?" Her tone expressed both horror and indignation.

"Well," said the bishop, "you could n't stop at the station all day, and it is too far to walk."

"No matter how far it was," said Miss Cushing. "I certainly should have walked, and I shall walk now."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said the bishop, mildly.

"But you must see," said Miss Cushing, "that this is improper. I have not seen James Braybrooke since he was a baby; yet, for his mother's sake, I would save him from public disgrace if he would abandon his practices. However, I am investigating a case against him, and I cannot accept the hospitality of his carriage."

"Would it not be judicial to suspend judgment until you have investigated?" suggested the bishop.

"Stop the carriage!" demanded Miss Cushing. "I am going to walk."

"From the next hill," said the bishop, "one gets quite the best view of the neighboring country." He put his hand on Miss Cushing's as if to say, "Hush, my child!"

There was no answer to make. Miss Cushing said nothing, but her mouth

straightened at the corners. They drove in silence for a few minutes, and then they passed the stone gateway of a country house, and presently the brick one of another.

"Are we very nearly there?" asked Miss Cushing.

"Yes," said the bishop; "I was just about to ask you with whom you were going to stop."

"I shall go to the hotel for lunch," she said; "but I am going to see a woman who lives near the club." She opened her bag and produced a letter. "A Mrs. Patrick Hennessey," she continued.

"I do not recall any such name," the bishop said. "Does the lady belong to your association?"

"No," said Miss Cushing; "but she intends to join, and she is much in sympathy with us."

"Oh, I see," said the bishop. "This is how you got your information."

Miss Cushing looked at him doubtfully. "I ought not to have told you this," she said, "because all complaints are treated

as confidential. You will say nothing about it, will you?"

"Assuredly not," said the bishop.

At this moment there appeared a young man on a polo pony, riding toward them. The bishop waved his hand to him, and the young man waved his hat in reply. As the trap came up to him he turned and rode beside it.

"Miss Cushing," said the bishop, "may I present Mr. Braybrooke?"

Miss Cushing bowed stiffly, and Mr. Braybrooke took off his hat again.

"Miss Cushing has come down—" began the bishop.

"We are very glad to see her," interrupted Mr. Braybrooke. "I think," he continued, speaking to Miss Cushing, "that you were a great friend of my mother's."

Miss Cushing bowed again.

"I saw you as you came over the hill," Braybrooke said to the bishop; "we've been having some gymkhanas on the lawn. I am afraid," he added apologetically, "that they are about over."

"That is too bad," said the bishop; "it would have been interesting to see them."

"Perhaps," said Braybrooke, "we can get up an extra race or two, but it is pretty nearly time for lunch. Are you interested in sports?" he asked Miss Cushing. As he spoke they turned into a gateway and rolled up a long private drive.

"Don't think of having anything on my account," said Miss Cushing, "because I could not stop; I really must be going on."

"Why?" said Braybrooke, with a shade of disappointment in his tone. "I hoped you had come down with Bishop Cunningham to stop the day with us."

"That 's very kind of you," said Miss Cushing, uncomfortably, "but I could n't think of it." She resolved to blurt out the truth. "You see," she began, "I 've—"

"Oh, I see," said Braybrooke; "you are lunching with some one else. Where can I send you?"

"This is most embarrassing," said Miss Cushing. "There was no cab at the station, and Bishop Cunningham insisted—"

"Of course," said Braybrooke. "I really wish you would stop with us; but if you are engaged for lunch, the trap will take you over."

Miss Cushing looked helplessly at the bishop.

"You would better stay to lunch," said the bishop.

"You really must," said Braybrooke, "if you have no other engagement."

"No, I could n't think of that," said Miss Cushing; "but if you could tell me how to get to the nearest hotel in the village I should be very grateful."

Braybrooke looked perplexed, and made no reply.

"If it is any trouble—" said Miss Cushing, quickly.

"It would be no trouble," said Braybrooke, "but there is n't any hotel. I might send you over to the club," he added, "but I don't think that ladies lunch at the club alone. I'll ask Mrs. Braybrooke."

The conversation was interrupted by their arrival at the house. The bishop

waved to Mrs. Braybrooke, who was on the veranda to meet them. "We have arrived, my dear," he said, and patted her hand affectionately. "Let me present you to Miss Cushing. She is my very dear friend."

Mrs. Braybrooke smiled. "It is very nice of you to come with the bishop," she said to Miss Cushing, "and it was very nice of him to come, too. This is a great event for us." She smiled again.

A pang of shame pierced Miss Cushing. "What shall I do?" she asked herself. Before an answer came the bishop handed her out upon the veranda.

"You are very good," she said abjectly to Mrs. Braybrooke. She looked at the bishop, but his gaze was directed across the lawn, where there was a tent and a group of men in boots and breeches.

"If you will excuse me a moment," said Braybrooke, "I 'll see if we can get up another race." He left the veranda.

"And if you will excuse *me*," said Mrs. Braybrooke, "I shall see if we are not soon going to have lunch; you must be fam-

ished." As she spoke she disappeared into the house.

But Miss Cushing knew that it was not to find out when lunch was to be served, but to order an extra place made at the lunch-table. She turned to the bishop.

"I can't — I can't stop and lunch in their house," she gasped.

The bishop looked at her mildly.

"I must explain at once," she went on. "How can I eat the bread of people whom it is my duty to prosecute at law? People whose hands are stained—"

"Wait a minute," interrupted the bishop. "I thought that you had come down here to investigate."

"But the articles!" exclaimed Miss Cushing, clutching the bag in which they were stowed away. "Can you have any real doubt? And then the statements of Mrs. Hennessey."

"But," said the bishop, calmly, "if you are going to make a personal investigation, you ought to make it. Don't you think so?"

"But it can only confirm what we already know," she said helplessly.

"Very well," said the bishop. "What are you going to do?"

"Exactly!" exclaimed Miss Cushing. "What *am* I going to do? Can't you suggest something? If I had not got into that carriage —" She stopped. She was too high-minded to intimate that it was his fault.

The bishop regarded her and deliberated. "Henrietta," he began firmly, "in past years you have had the experience of a woman of the world, and you know that you have no moral right to make a scene or to injure the feelings of others. It is not for me to say what you should do, but I would suggest that you accept the situation until you can escape from it with decency."

"Do you think," demanded Miss Cushing, "that it is right for me to lunch with people whom I propose to prosecute in the courts?"

"What else is there to do?" replied the bishop.

At that moment Mrs. Braybrooke appeared from the house. She spoke to Miss Cushing. "You must come with me," she said; "I want you to see the baby."

"The baby?" repeated Miss Cushing. ("Is there a baby?" she said to herself.)

"Why, yes," said Mrs. Braybrooke, rather at a loss.

"Of course," said Miss Cushing. "I want to see it"; and she followed Mrs. Braybrooke in.

Braybrooke came back as they disappeared. "I suppose," he said to the bishop, in an undertone, "that Miss Cushing did n't expect that we would be having people to lunch, and feels embarrassed. It was awfully nice of her to come down."

"I don't think she did expect to find a party," the bishop replied.

"You see," said Braybrooke, "I feel that it is a good deal for Miss Cushing to come down here just to be present at the baby's christening."

"You are quite right," said the bishop; "but there is somebody coming to announce lunch."

As they took their places in the dining-room the bishop observed that Miss Cushing wore a softer expression and that there was a mild light in her gray eyes. He smiled.

"I am very sorry," said Braybrooke,—Miss Cushing was sitting upon his right,— "that we could n't get up a race for you. But, you see, the men were hungry and were cross as beasts. Besides, they had sent their horses to be cooled out. But perhaps," he continued, "later, after the show, we can get up something."

"*After the show?*" repeated Miss Cushing, inquiringly.

"I ought to have said after the ceremony," said Braybrooke, apologizing. "I'm awfully careless."

"Oh, the ceremony!" exclaimed Miss Cushing. "Oh, I understand." ("*The ceremony*," she repeated to herself. "What ceremony? What kind of party have I come upon?")

"By the way, did you see it?" asked Braybrooke. He nodded his head upward.

Miss Cushing looked at him inquiringly.

"The baby," he said.

"Oh, yes," said Miss Cushing; "he is charming."

"Whom do you think he looks like?" Braybrooke demanded.

"You," replied Miss Cushing; "he is very like you."

Braybrooke grinned. "I think so, too," he said; "but they say I'm conceited to think so."

Miss Cushing smiled. "He seems fond of the child," she said to herself. "He is very like his mother. It is hard to believe that he pursues little drags to death." This reflection recalled her mission, and made her miserable again until Willie Colfax, who sat upon her other hand, engaged her in conversation.

"Do you ride much?" inquired Mr. Colfax, blandly.

Braybrooke, who overheard, shot him an annoyed glance. He knew that his brother-in-law was preparing to sell a horse.

"Each afternoon that is fine," said Miss Cushing, "I go to the park in my victoria."

"I know," observed Mr. Colfax, "but do you ride much? Have you any saddle-horses?"

Miss Cushing looked at him suspiciously, but his expression was sweet and innocent.

"I used to ride when I was a girl," she said, "but that was a long time ago."

Mr. Colfax regarded her incredulously. "You ought to keep it up," he said. "I believe in enjoying things while we can. Still," he continued, "one can get a great deal of pleasure out of a good harness-horse, too. I have rather a good one."

"Really," said Miss Cushing. "I should like to see it. I am fond of horses."

"I'll show him to you," said Mr. Colfax, politely. Here Braybrooke interrupted him, and the subject was changed.

Miss Cushing enjoyed the lunch-party in spite of her qualms of conscience. It was different from any that she could remember. At times it was rather noisy, but she thought it entertaining. Mr. Colfax's suggestion that she take a place at Oakdale was, of course, out of the ques-

tion, but it was pleasant to have people express kind wishes. She liked Mr. Colfax.

When lunch was over she had an opportunity to speak to the bishop.

"They have been talking about some ceremony that is to take place," she said. "Do you know what it is?"

The bishop looked surprised. "Have n't you heard?" he said. "They are going to baptize the child."

"And is that what you came down for?" Miss Cushing demanded.

"Yes," replied the bishop.

"But why did n't you tell me?" said Miss Cushing.

"You did n't ask me," the bishop answered.

Miss Cushing looked about her anxiously, and drew a long breath. "I *must* slip away," she said. "Even if I have lunched with these people, I cannot intrude into the circle invited to be present on a solemn occasion of this kind. Besides, I must find Mrs. Hennessey. Yes, I must slip away," she continued. "Directly I

get home I shall write and explain, and I do wish that you would write, too."

"I shall write anything you wish," replied the bishop. "However, I don't see how you are going to 'slip away.'"

Miss Cushing looked furtively about, as if considering an exit by one of the windows, when Mrs. Braybrooke approached and spoke to her.

"Do you mind driving to the church with my brother, Mr. Colfax?" she asked. "If you have the least objection, don't hesitate to say so," she continued, "because I don't mind telling him that you can't go. But he asked, as a great favor, to be allowed to take you."

Miss Cushing looked at the bishop. His face was expressionless. She gave a nervous little laugh. "Of course I have n't the *least* objection," she said. "I am much flattered."

"That 's so good of you," said Mrs. Braybrooke, with her delightful smile. "It will please Willie, and it will be perfectly safe, because he has Planet." She turned and left them.

Miss Cushing stood facing the bishop. Her bosom heaved, but she said nothing. At first it seemed as if the bishop were about to speak; then his mouth shut tightly.

At this juncture Mr. Colfax appeared.

"My cart is here," he said to Miss Cushing, and bowed.

Without a word Miss Cushing followed. From the veranda she climbed over an enormous wheel, and found herself driving to the church in a primrose-yellow dog-cart behind Planet, who, with extra heavy shoes, was performing showily. She fell to thinking about the situation.

"He's not bad-looking, is he?" began Mr. Colfax.

"I beg your pardon?" said Miss Cushing, aroused from her thoughts.

Mr. Colfax repeated the question.

"He has reference to the baby, I presume," thought Miss Cushing. "He's a sweet dear," she replied.

"He is," said Mr. Colfax; "and though that splint on his off fore leg is conspicuous, he's never gone sore with it. A good blister would take it off."

Miss Cushing looked at him in horror. Then she appreciated that there had been a misunderstanding, and held her peace. As they pulled up in the village street before the church, Mr. Colfax was still discussing Planet, his breeding, conformation, and manners; but it was all lost upon Miss Cushing. During the last ten minutes she had been formulating an artifice which promised to save her from committing the quasi-sacrilege that was imminent. The afternoon was warm, and she planned to linger in the vestibule until all had gone into the church, under the pretext of a headache, which the close air indoors would aggravate. The church inside, as a matter of fact, was damp and pleasantly cool, not having been opened for several days; but well-bred people do not insist too much upon facts.

Miss Cushing's artifice promised success. The entire party passed in together, and no one urged her to enter. Only Mr. Colfax remained outside, raptly watching Planet's action as the groom drove him up and down the village street. But Miss

Cushing knew that Mr. Colfax was to be the godfather, and she felt that he, too, would come in a reasonable time before the ceremony was to begin.

To avoid being seen from the street, she withdrew into a corner of the vestibule close to the leather swinging-doors which opened into one of the side aisles. Here she stood, ready to assume an attitude of entering, when, to her alarm, she heard voices of people approaching from the inside. The owners of the voices stopped, apparently close to the doors, and began a conference.

"What did the man say?" she heard a woman's voice demand. She recognized the speaker as Mrs. Braybrooke.

"He said that her leader ran away and smashed things up," a man's voice answered. The man's voice was Braybrooke's.

"Well, could n't she have come in another trap?" Mrs. Braybrooke demanded.

"The man said that they went into a ditch and put her shoulder out," replied Braybrooke.

"What a pity!" said Mrs. Braybrooke.

"Poor Kitty will be laid up again for the hunting."

"That must be the Kitty," said Miss Cushing to herself, "who was going to be godmother." A feeling of relief came over her. "They 'll postpone it," she thought.

"Yes," said Braybrooke, on the other side of the doors; "it will very likely lay her up. I wonder if she hurt her horses. Her leader was that mare she was going to sell Mr. Heminway for Anita."

"Well," said Mrs. Braybrooke, "I 'm sorry for Kitty, but what are *we* going to do?"

"You might ask Jane to take her place," suggested Braybrooke.

"If I do that," Mrs. Braybrooke replied, "Emily and Josephine will both think it strange that I did n't ask them."

"But you can't ask them all," said Braybrooke. "Have n't they any sense?"

Mrs. Braybrooke ignored his question. "I wish I knew what to do," she said helplessly. "There was, of course, a special reason for having Kitty, but—" She stopped. "It would be much easier,"

she continued, "to have somebody whom Josephine and Emily and Jane did n't know at all. I wish I could get Sally Thompson here from Washington."

"It's all right to wish," said Braybrooke, "but we've got to get a godmother. The bishop is waiting."

"It's all right for you to say we've got to get somebody," said Mrs. Braybrooke, "but whom can we get?"

"Well," said Braybrooke, "if you want somebody outside of our own crowd, it is easy to choose, because there is only one such here."

For the moment Miss Cushing's heart stopped beating. It was like the age-long moment of a nightmare.

"It was awfully civil of her to come down with the bishop," she heard Braybrooke continue, "just because she was an old friend of my mother's; and if we explained the thing she would probably help us out."

"It was very sweet of her," said Mrs. Braybrooke; "but she has never known *us*, and she might think it was indelicate."

"I don't think so," said Braybrooke. "We did n't think it was indelicate of her to come down without an invitation, did we?"

"No," said Mrs. Braybrooke; "we took it as a compliment."

"She would take it as a compliment, too," Braybrooke replied. "Anyway," he continued, "it 's like being asked to be a groomsman or pall-bearer; one can't refuse."

Miss Cushing heard no more, because she had fled to the church door. In the doorway stood Mr. Colfax, exhaling a last puff from his cigarette.

"Where are you going?" he inquired. "Is anything the matter?"

"Nothing," said Miss Cushing. "I thought it would be cooler outside."

"I think you are mistaken," said Mr. Colfax; "it is much cooler in the church. I have n't been in yet, but I know. It 's awfully hot in the street. Are you feeling ill?"

"Well," said Miss Cushing, vaguely, "you see, I don't feel exactly ill." She paused.

"I 'm sorry," said Mr. Colfax, sympathetically. "I 'd better tell Mrs. Braybrooke."

"Oh, don't!" exclaimed Miss Cushing. "Please don't!"

"But," said Mr. Colfax, "my sister would be angry with me if I did n't."

"Oh," said Miss Cushing, "I feel very much better. In fact, I feel quite well."

Mr. Colfax looked at her with polite doubt, but she made a gesture of protest.

"Then," said he, "shall we go in?"

Miss Cushing did not answer him, because the leather doors opened into the vestibule and Mr. and Mrs. Braybrooke came through them.

"I say," said Braybrooke, "we 've been hunting everywhere for you two."

Miss Cushing folded her hands and waited in silence.

"I was just coming in," said Mr. Colfax, and he threw away his cigarette.

WHEN Miss Cushing arrived at the Braybrookes' house after the ceremony, Mr. Colfax handed her out of the cart.

"I think we are a pretty fine team at a christening," he observed.

Miss Cushing smiled in a dazed sort of way and nodded her head. She looked toward the bishop, who was standing in the doorway. The bishop caught her look, but pretended not to, and disappeared into the house. He did not feel that he had anything to say at that moment which would be helpful.

Miss Cushing went into the house, too, in a mechanical way. Her ideas and feelings were so confused that she had no ideas left, and her feelings were rapidly reaching the point of outburst. In fact, she did not know whether to laugh or cry, and she was ready to do either. Inside everybody was gathering in the big library, and she could see the servants bringing trays on which were champagne-glasses. Mr. Colfax followed her and found a chair for her, and presently she was surrounded by a group of men. Besides Mr. Colfax were Mr. Carteret, Mr. Varick, and other members of the hunt. The bishop and Braybrooke, who were passing, stopped and joined the circle.

"There is the greater responsibility upon Miss Cushing," Mr. Carteret was saying, "because so little can be expected from the infant's godfather."

Miss Cushing did not have to reply, because everybody laughed, even Mr. Colfax.

"Then you ought to come down soon," Mr. Colfax said to Miss Cushing, "and begin your work. It might amuse you to come down next Monday. We run a drag. Have you ever seen a drag hunt?"

Miss Cushing stiffened up in her chair. The opportunity for her to declare herself and satisfy her conscience had come.

"Mr. Colfax," she said solemnly, "do you believe it right to pursue a harmless little animal with fierce hounds?"

A heavy silence hung over the room.

"Animal?" said Mr. Colfax.

"Yes," said Miss Cushing; "I said animal."

"But it 's a drag," said Mr. Colfax, aghast.

"You intimate that a drag is not an animal. Please explain," said Miss Cushing.

Then Mr. Colfax explained. The men

shut their mouths tightly, and each looked straight ahead of him at some selected point on the opposite wall.

In the silence that followed after Mr. Colfax had finished, the people in the room heard Miss Cushing murmur to herself, "Well, well, well!"

She said nothing else.

After a pause the bishop began to speak. "Miss Cushing," he said, "is very tender-hearted, and when she reads in the newspapers of drag-hunting, and notes the list of those who are 'in at the death,' her heart is full of pity and sympathy for what she had quite naturally supposed to be an animate quarry. Moreover, she is an officer of a very admirable society for the prevention of cruelty to dumb creatures, and it is her duty to interfere whenever she may chance to observe it. Hence this misapprehension."

Braybrooke made a low exclamation. "Miss Cushing," he said, "I am awfully glad to find this out."

Miss Cushing looked at him inquiringly. "Why?" she said.

"Because I have a case for you," he replied. "You see, our laundress at the kennels poured a kettle of hot water over one of the hounds."

"Atrocious!" exclaimed Miss Cushing. "Give me her name!"

"I don't want her punished," said Braybrooke, "but I want her prevented from doing it again. Can your society do that? You see, she sometimes drinks too much."

"I shall have our agent sent down at once," said Miss Cushing. "Give me her name."

"She is a Mrs. Hennessey," said Braybrooke; "I think Patrick is her husband's name."

"Hennessey!" exclaimed Miss Cushing.

"Yes," Braybrooke replied.

At this moment the circle of men parted to admit Mrs. Braybrooke.

"You must n't monopolize *all* the men," she said, with a smile, to Miss Cushing. "Besides—" She stopped and half turned as the rattle of glasses on the metal tray sounded behind her.

"I say," said Willie Colfax, "I think

you people ought to drink the health of the godparents."

"I think," said the bishop, "that it would be eminently proper to toast the godmother, particularly as the circumstances, I might say, are somewhat unusual."

"They prove," observed Braybrooke, quite reverently, "that the Lord will provide, don't they?"

"They do," said the bishop. Then they drank Miss Cushing's health.

"And now," said Miss Cushing, beaming, "I propose a toast to my godson. I neglected to bring his porringer with me, but I shall attend to that later." And they drank that toast, too.

A servant approached the bishop and spoke a few words in a whisper.

"Henrietta," said the bishop, "it seems that we must rush for our train. The carriage has been waiting some time."

They hurried out in a confusion of handshakings and got into the trap.

"Good-by, everybody!" cried Miss Cushing, and they all answered "Good-

by," and waved their hands, except Mr. Colfax, who stood on the veranda with a bottle of champagne, and called after them: "Come back! You 've forgotten to drink to the godfather!"

When the trap turned into the highway, the bishop looked thoughtfully at Miss Cushing. "Well," he said, "you have discovered a case."

Miss Cushing shot him a quiet glance, and gazed off over the pasture-lands, on which stretched the long afternoon shadows of the elms.

The bishop saw that she was smiling, and made no reply. He, too, looked off over the meadows.

THE ECHO HUNT

VI

THE ECHO HUNT

WHARTON came in from the stables, and met his wife in the hallway. He stopped and smiled.

"There 's a great game on out there," he said, making a gesture toward the terrace behind the house.

"The children?" she asked.

He nodded. "It 's something that has developed since I 've been away—hunters and hounds and steeplechasers. You ought to see Bub," he added.

"Is he bad?" she asked.

"I suppose so," said Wharton; "but that was n't what I meant. It 's his costume. He 's magnificent."

She smiled.

"Do you know where they have picked up their horse-talk?" he went on.

"I suppose from Williams and the men at the stables," she answered.

He shook his head. "I don't think so," he said. "They have a lot of English expressions that no one about here uses. Williams never took care of hunters before he came to us."

"Then I don't know," she said; "they have n't used them before me. Are they still at it?"

"I fancy so," he replied. "Come and see. We can watch them from behind the kitchen lattice."

She threw a golf-cape over her shoulders and followed him. There were three children on the terrace, surrounded with the sticks, the fragments of things, the broken tops that furnish the child's play-world. In the center was a hurdle made of three laths which were supported at the ends with bricks.

"They seem to be schooling over that jump," whispered Wharton. "Look at your baby."

Bub, who was mounted on a broom-handle, was galloping in circles, apparently warming up for a go at the hurdle. Over his normal clothes he wore what seemed to be a square of red flannel, in which a hole had been cut for the head. It was belted at the waist with a strap, and was trimmed off above the knees to give the effect of a huntsman's coat. His feet were in his own rubber boots, which, however, were adorned with brown-paper tops. From the ankle of one dangled a rusty spur. On his head, or rather inclosing his head, was a man's cork polo-helmet.

"Where do you suppose he got those things?" said Mrs. Wharton.

"Give it up," said Wharton. "Probably the coat is Elinora's handiwork. He's an M. F. H., or something, turned out in pink."

"Hush!" whispered Mrs. Wharton. The two older children were talking.

"It's my turn," said Elinora. She was mounted astride a small spotted rocking-horse from which the rockers had disappeared.

"But truly, Elinora," said John, "Shamrock is n't up to your weight." John looked at the rocking-horse and then at Elinora. "I don't think," he observed doubtfully, "that that horse would carry thirteen stone to hounds."

"Thirteen stone!" whispered Wharton. "Did you hear?"

"Yes, he would," replied Elinora. "Did n't he take the prize at the Dublin show?"

John still looked doubtful. "Let me go first," he said.

"No," said Elinora; "it's my turn."

"Well," said John, "but please be careful this time, and don't drag your hind legs."

He looked apprehensively at the rocking-horse and then at the hurdle.

"I'll try," said Elinora.

"I'll take a rail off," suggested John.

The top lath was a foot from the ground.

"No; don't!" said Elinora.

She seized her mount by mane and tail, and after a few preliminary rearings and curvets, cantered cautiously at the ob-

stacle, checked, lifted the fore legs over, and then leaped with her own. However, when she raised the rocking-horse's front legs it depressed those behind. There was the sound of tumbling bricks. The hurdle was wrecked.

"Oh, Elinora!" said John, sadly. "Whirlwind could have jumped it."

"I am sorry," said Elinora.

But Bub only yelled and made his broomstick prance.

"Destruction appeals to Bubby," whispered his father behind the lattice.

"He 's only six," said Mrs. Wharton.

"I told you," said John, mournfully, as he set to repairing the hurdle, "Shamrock is too green, or something. You 've put a leg on him. You 'd better do it up in wet blandages."

"*Bandages*," said Elinora, "not *blandages*."

She became absorbed in examining the legs of the rocking-horse, and John restored the hurdle.

"Do you really think," inquired Elinora, "that we ought to do his leg up?"

John rode over and laid his mount on the ground. It was a stick with a wooden horse's head on the end of it. Then he gravely ran his hand down the rocking-horse's hind legs.

"There 's fever in them," he said. "I really think he ought to be fired," he added, with more interest. "Let 's do it with matches."

"No," said Elinora; "it 's cruel." She looked regretfully at some charred marks which a piece of red-hot barrel-hoop had made on Shamrock's front legs.

John picked up his mount. "I wish Whirlwind had legs," he observed; "but," he added resignedly, "he can beat you, and he can jump higher, too."

"There 's the bandages," said Elinora. She produced a dust-cloth, tore it in strips, and gave one of them to John.

"You do the other leg," she said.

"That 's why the parlor-maid's dust-cloths have been disappearing," whispered Mrs. Wharton.

"No," said John; "I have n't time. I 've got to jump Whirlwind."

He turned away and began a preliminary gallop before going at the hurdle.

Bub had watched the treatment of Shamrock's legs till John turned away; then facing his broomstick at the jump, he charged it, took off too far away, floundered through the laths, and rolled over on his head.

Mrs. Wharton started, but her husband caught her arm.

"He 's not hurt," he said.

"Oh, Bubby," exclaimed John, "why don't you behave? Did n't we say you were too little to jump anything but small drains?"

Bub rose and looked apprehensively at John. He saw that there was no imminent danger, and the anxiety faded from his face.

"I 'm the first whip," he said stolidly. He glanced at his costume as if for confirmation, and his eyes lingered proudly on the spur.

"You 're a naughty boy," said John. "Don't you ever touch that hurdle again."

Bub kicked contemptuously at the laths.

A flash came into John's eyes.

"What shall I do with my little son?" murmured Mrs. Wharton behind the lattice.

John stepped forward, but stopped as he heard a shout from Elinora.

"The hounds are out!" screamed Elinora.

The beagle, the family fox-terrier, and a setter pup suddenly emerged from the dog-house near the stables and tore across the terrace. Elinora went after them, shouting: "Gone away!" She was followed by John. As they disappeared around the corner of the house, Bub again kicked at the hurdle. Then he followed.

"Well," said Wharton, behind the lattice, "what do you think of your children?"

She shook her head and smiled. "If they were to be horse-dealers or stable-boys, I should feel encouraged," she said. "Where do you suppose they picked up all those ideas?"

"That 's what I asked you."

"In the mornings they go off to the

woods on the hill," she observed, "and in the afternoons they play on the terrace, but very rarely about the stables."

"Have you taken them to the kennels?" he asked.

"No," she answered; "not this year."

"It's odd," he said, and they went into the house.

THE next day Wharton went hunting. The hounds found a fox, and followed him six miles to the stream that flowed at the foot of the hill back of Wharton's house. Here the pack checked. The huntsman came up and cast down the stream in the direction of a ford.

"That fellow is wrong," said Wharton to himself.

There was an English girl out that day whom Wharton had just met. He liked her. She was handsome, and she went well. He rode along beside her.

"The huntsman is making a mistake," he said; "if you come with me I think we shall have the hounds to ourselves when they pick the line up again. A few

hundred yards up-stream there is a fallen tree that bridges the water. I suspect that the fox has crossed on it. It leads to the usual runway on the other side. Farther up, half a mile or more, is another ford. Beyond the ford the valley turns sharply to the left and winds around that hill. If we get on the hillside we command each of the two lines that the fox can take. When the hounds come along, they will cross on the log, but the field must go around by the ford, and we shall have ten minutes' start."

"You're very well posted in woodcraft," she said, smiling.

"No," answered Wharton; "but this is my own country. My house is over the hill. The hounds are to meet there on Saturday. I hope you will be out."

"I hope to be," she said. "Shall we slip away from the field?"

He nodded, and they turned their horses up the stream, rode past the fallen tree, crossed at the upper ford, and slowly ascended the wooded hillside. From time to time they could see the huntsman on

his gray horse working the pack in the bottom-land, and when the covert hid him they could hear his horn.

"Look," said Wharton. "He has given up his ford theory. He thinks now that the fox doubled back. Presently he'll find out that that is wrong, too, and then he'll swing around through the woods and work up the stream."

"You are really very wonderful," she said, laughing.

He bowed.

"As I told you," he answered, "I happen to know this bit of country. I'll show you a jump I once saw a woman take. We'll have time.

"She was a stranger," Wharton went on, "and she rode hard. We were coming over this hill very fast, and she went at that rail fence you see ahead."

"That's not such a very nasty-looking fence," observed Miss Melville.

"No," said Wharton; "but there is a twelve-foot drop on the other side into a road. I measured it afterward. Come and look at it."

The girl shuddered and turned her head.

"I don't want to see it," she said.

"Do you expect to see her ghost cantering down the road?" asked Wharton. "I fancy that is what ought to happen if we were in a real English wood. This would be an especially good spot for ghosts," he added, "on account of the echoes that come around the shoulder of the hill. On the other side, where we were first, we could hear the horn. On this side one can't hear it, but we shall get the echo presently."

"Really," said the girl, "I don't believe in ghosts, but I should like to hear the echo."

"Well," said Wharton,—they were standing by the fence,—"the strange thing about this jump—" He broke off as the sound of voices came from the road below. "The strange thing—" he repeated absently, and stopped again. He motioned her to be silent, and slipped off his horse.

Just then, faint but clear, came the echoed "t-o-o-o-t, t-o-o-o-t!"—the long-

drawn note of the horn when the huntsman is calling in the hounds.

"Is that an echo?" asked Miss Melville.

Wharton nodded. The next moment he started and turned his head intently.

"Did you hear that?" said a voice in the road. It was a child's voice; Wharton recognized it as Elinora's.

Then another child's voice sounded, clumsily imitating the echo.

"That 's Bub," said Wharton under his breath. He turned toward Miss Melville, who was farther away from the fence.

"Those are my children," he whispered; "I'll give them a surprise. Will you hold my horse?"

He was stretching out his hand with the bridle-rein, when a new voice came from the road. Miss Melville started, and the color left her face.

"The Echo Hunt is having sport to-day," the voice said. It was a man's low-pitched voice, and spoke with an English intonation.

"You bet we are!" a child answered. That was John.

A pleasant laugh came in the man's voice. "I must bet, must I, you little Yankee! I've never needed that advice."

The man laughed again. Wharton looked at Miss Melville. Her bosom rose and fell excitedly.

"What 's the matter?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Nothing," she answered. Wharton gave her the rein, tiptoed to the fence, and looked over the rails. Down in the road, in a low phaëton drawn by a fat gray pony, sat a strange man surrounded by the Wharton children. The man seemed about forty. His face was covered with a sandy beard. He wore clothes of brown homespun and dogskin gloves, and on his head was a tweed cap.

The echo sounded again.

"Hush!" said Elinora.

The man pulled up the pony, which had started to walk, and listened.

"They seem to be working this way," he said. "We 'll get a burst yet."

"Where ought Bub to go?" asked John.

The man looked across toward the opposite hillside and pointed to a patch of woods.

"I think," he said, "that a knowing huntsman like John would send the first whip to the far side of that bit of covert. Then, you see, if he steals away—"

"I thought," interrupted Elinora, "that we were hunting the stump-tailed—" she hesitated.

"Quite right! It is *she*, the stump-tailed vixen," said the man. "Listen," he added. The echo brought a faint, short "toot," and then, after a pause, another and then another.

"They 've gone into covert," he went on. "Perhaps they 'll happen on the old girl curled up in a hollow log. Then we 'll hear something."

"What?" asked Bub.

"You wait," said the man.

They waited in silence for a few moments, but the echo did not come again.

Wharton turned and looked for Miss Melville. She was walking his horse deeper in the woods. Her back was turned to him.

"I ought to go," he thought. Then he heard Elinora's voice, and he peered through the rails again.

"Tell us," said Elinora, "about the race—you know, the what-you-may-call-'em handicap—and about Whirlwind."

"The Tunbridgeshire?" said the man.

"Yes," said Elinora.

"Please do," said John; "and how you lost your leg."

Bub, who was sitting between the man's knees, patted his left leg with an expression of awful satisfaction.

"Well," the man began, "there was the favorite, Morning-star; and Egyptian; and Glengarry, that ran second the year before in the National; and Whirlwind. And there was a field of others—near a dozen—with no class or heart."

"What 's that?" said Elinora.

"They were n't race-horses," he said.

"And you lay back on Whirlwind till the second time at the Liverpool," put in John. "Now go on."

"You little beggars," exclaimed the man, "you know the story by heart!"

"Not the part where you lost your leg," protested John.

"Yes, you do," said the man; "I'll not tell you another word."

"Oh, please!" said John.

"Not a word," said the man.

There was silence for a moment; then John spoke. "It must be fine," he said, "to have a wooden leg like yours if you were captured by the Indians. When they tortured you, you could just laugh at them."

"Yes," said the man, pleasantly, "that would be a ripping joke on the redskins—a ripping joke," he repeated. Then he caught the gaze of Elinora's eyes looking up into his face, and he turned his own away.

"It must be awful," she said; "and you can't ever ride again?" Her lip trembled.

"Why, yes," said the man, cheerily; "can't I ride in a phaëton, and be the M. F. H. of the Echo Hunt?"

"You told us to say *drive* in a phaëton," said John.

"So I did," said the man, and he

laughed. "I 've got something more to tell you about Whirlwind—something new," he went on. "He 's going to start again day after to-morrow in the Woolwich steeplechase. A friend of mine has him now, you know, and I received a letter a few days ago, saying that he was quite fit. And so I have cabled over a bit of a stake on him. Not much, you know,—one should n't bet beyond one's means,—but just a bit for the fun of it. If you can't bet that way, you never should bet at all. Promise me you 'll remember that when you have a stable."

"I 'll promise," said John.

"That 's a good youngster," said the man. Then he leaned back and laughed his low, pleasant laugh. He stopped suddenly. Elinora's eyes were looking up into his face again.

"The old horse starts at very good odds," he said. "If we win a bit, it will come handy to winter the stock." He spoke as if he had a great breeding-farm. Then he looked at the gray pony and laughed again. As his laughter died

away Wharton heard the echo rising again.

"Hello!" exclaimed the man in the phaëton. "Listen!"

There sounded a "toot-toot-toot! toot-toot-toot!" and again "toot-toot-toot!" and again the series of short-cut notes.

"They 're off!" he said. Then, faint and clear in the silence that followed, the echo brought the chorus of the hounds.

"There's music for you!" he exclaimed.

He straightened himself, and shook the reins over the pony.

"Tally-ho!" he shouted. "Gone away, Echo Hunt!"

"Gone away!" screamed the children. The man waved the whip, and the pony broke into a canter. "Sit tight!" he called, and they swung around the bend in the road and disappeared.

WHARTON stood by the fence a moment.

"That must be the chap who took the cottage over the hill," he said to himself. "I'll hunt him up this afternoon and ask him to dine."

He turned and walked toward Miss Melville, who was coming back with his horse.

"Who was that shouting?" she asked.

"An Englishman who has the cottage around the hill," he answered. "Why?"

"His voice gave me a great shock," said the girl. "It was like the voice of a friend of mine."

"Ah-ha!" said Wharton, gaily; "who knows—perhaps?"

"No," she said quickly; "my friend is dead."

The tears came slowly into her eyes.

"I beg your pardon," he said, and turned away. "I am an ass," he added to himself.

He watched a great cottonwood leaf circle down through the still air and settle on the ground. Overhead the tree-tops traced themselves in silhouette against the windless blue, and here and there in the vistas of the wood a flood of October sunshine came through to glorify some frost-painted maple. Suddenly, coming from the far distance into the stillness, he heard

the hounds in cry. This time it was not echo. The sound grew stronger as he listened.

"They 're coming," he said. "They 'll cross below us." He turned, took his horse, mounted, and led the way through the trees at a gallop.

AS Wharton turned into his driveway that afternoon, walking a very tired horse, his wife, who was driving in a buckboard, overtook him. She pulled the ponies down to a walk.

"Hello!" he said. "We had a great run; and say," he added, "I 've made a discovery."

"That 's nice," she answered. "I 've had a good day myself."

He looked at her. "What 's up?" he asked.

"Tell me your discovery," she answered.

"I 've found out who it is," he said, "that has been playing with the children."

"Well?" she said.

"It 's the Englishman who took Wheel-

wright's cottage over the hill. He seems like a nice chap. Would you mind having him to dinner?"

"I should be glad," she answered. She said nothing more, and flicked a fly off the near pony's withers.

"You don't seem to think much of my discovery," he observed.

"Well, you see," she answered, "I've made a discovery of my own. Look!" She threw the robe back, and disclosed a tea-service which covered the bottom of the trap.

"It is n't plate," she said; "it's old English silver. It's what I've been looking for for years."

"Oh, silver, is it?" said Wharton. "This is a fortunate discovery for me. A kettle, two tea-pots, besides all the bowls and pitchers—good heavens, Elizabeth!"

"Now calm yourself," she said. "I've got it actually for less than what a set of good Sheffield plate would cost. Some family in the hills that had it for years are going away, or something, and they put it on sale this morning with the furniture-

and undertaker-man in the village. Suppose somebody else had happened to see it first!"

"I 'm disgusted with you," said Wharton. "A bargain turns a woman into a bird of prey. I should hope you would think a little of the people who parted with it for *virtually nothing*. Very likely it 's an heirloom."

"I suppose it is," she said. "There 's a coat-of-arms on each piece. I 'm sorry for them," she added; "but I 'm glad I got it, if they had to part with it." She drew the robe up and covered her purchase again. "How did you happen to find out," she continued, changing the subject, "that it was our neighbor who has been educating the children? He 's been in the cottage six weeks, ever since you went shooting out West, and I 've never laid eyes on him."

"I 'll tell you when we get into the house," he answered.

They had reached the porte-cochère, and her groom took the ponies while he waited for a man from the stables to come

for his hunter. When the butler came out of the house to take in the silver he was still waiting. The man handed him a telegram.

Wharton tore it open and read it.

"Confound it!" he said.

His wife looked at him apprehensively.

"It 's nothing but business," he said. "I 've got to go to New York on the afternoon train, and I don't know when I shall get back. Henderson," he added to the man, "pack my bag for three days."

WHARTON got back Saturday morning as the people were beginning to arrive for his hunt breakfast. He changed hurriedly into riding-clothes, and went down to greet his guests. He said "Good morning" to the M. F. H., brought in some farmers' wives who were sitting shyly in their buggies, saw to it that the huntsman and whips got ale and sandwiches, and then went to the dining-room. There he saw Wheelwright and Miss Melville eating breakfast in a corner.

He caught Henderson as he moved through the crowd and asked him for some coffee. Then he joined the party in the corner.

"I was telling Miss Melville," said Wheelwright, "that we ought to find that fox you hunted on Wednesday. He went to earth not far from here."

"That 's so," said Wharton.

"We had better follow Mr. Wharton," said Miss Melville. "I think he has an understanding with the foxes, and knows where they are going beforehand. On Wednesday—"

"Please don't tell that to Wheelwright," interrupted Wharton, "because he knows the country about here, too, and he 'll explain how there was n't anything remarkable about our cast. If he had been out on Wednesday, he would have come along, too, and very likely would have taken you away from me. He is considered much more attractive than I."

Miss Melville laughed. "That may be two for Mr. Wheelwright," she said, "but it 's certainly one for yourself."

"Of course," said Wharton, "I 'll admit I 'm moderately attractive."

"The man 's here with your coffee," said Wheelwright.

Wharton turned and took the plate and coffee-cup. Instead of leaving, Henderson held out a package wrapped in white tissue-paper, and a long envelop.

"These were just left for you, sir," he said.

Wharton glanced at the envelop. The handwriting was unfamiliar.

"I don't want these things," he said. "Put them with my mail in the smoking-room."

The man turned away.

"Wait," Wharton called; "I 'll take the letter. Will you excuse me," he said to Miss Melville, "if I open it?"

She smiled. "We will," she answered; "that is, if you will tell Mr. Wheelwright and me who is sending you packages wrapped in white tissue-paper."

Wharton set his plate on the mantel-shelf, tore off the end of the envelop, and drew out a sheet of letter-paper. He

glanced at the signature, and read the first few sentences.

"This is from your tenant, I fancy," he said to Wheelwright; "the chap who has your cottage over the hill."

"I got a note from him myself last night," said Wheelwright. "He 's going away."

"Yes; so he says," murmured Wharton, reading on. He raised his eyes from the letter. "Your suspicions," he said to Miss Melville, "are unjust. That package contains presents"—he glanced down again at the letter—" 'for Miss Elinora and the Messrs. Wharton of the Echo Hunt.'"

"What does that mean?" asked Wheelwright.

"It 's a game he had with them," answered Wharton.

He read to the end, and ran his fingers into the large envelop, and drew out one of note-paper size.

"He wants me to register a letter for him," he said. "Why does n't he register his own letters?"

The envelop came out back upper-

most, and was unsealed. Wharton turned it over. There were three five-cent stamps on it. As he read the address, some one passing through the crowd jostled his elbow and shook the letter from his hand. It struck the floor, and there was a ring of metal, and a small object slipped out upon the polished wood.

"Money, money!" exclaimed Miss Melville.

"Yes," said Wharton; "protect me from Wheelwright."

He bent hurriedly down and began groping for the thing that had slipped out. His fingers closed on it under the flounce of a woman's skirt. It was not a coin. He glanced down at it. There was a Victoria Cross in his hand. He slipped it back into the envelop, and as he rose he wet the mucilage and sealed the letter.

"My tenant," said Wheelwright, "must be very much of a gentleman or have great confidence in you."

"He never saw me," said Wharton. He half turned away from the two, and stood staring vacantly into the crowd with

the newly sealed envelop covered in his hand.

"That accounts for it," said Wheelwright.

Miss Melville laughed. "I am going over to speak to Mrs. Wharton," she said. "She is pouring tea by the window."

"Yes," said Wharton, mechanically; "she'll be glad to see you."

The girl moved away.

"I say, Wheelwright," he said in an undertone, "this is a curious thing."

"What?" said Wheelwright.

Wharton held out the letter.

Wheelwright gave a low exclamation. It was addressed to Miss M. J. Melville, Ormsly Hill, Leicestershire, England.

"That is n't our Miss Melville," said Wheelwright.

"Yes, it is," said Wharton. "Her name is Mary J. Melville, and her father's place is Ormsly in Leicestershire."

"Well," said Wheelwright, "why don't you deliver it to her?"

"I suppose I shall," said Wharton;

"but it 's a little strange. Besides, I was asked to post it."

He worked his way through the crowd around the center-table to the bow-window where Mrs. Wharton was pouring tea. Miss Melville was standing beside her.

"Have you had some tea?" he asked.

"Thanks; I don't care for any," she answered.

Mrs. Wharton looked up at her husband. "I 've found out about the coat-of-arms," she said, nodding to the tea-service before her. "Miss Melville recognized it." She mentioned the family name which the Englishman had signed in the letter to Wharton.

"That 's very curious," Wharton murmured.

Miss Melville overheard him.

"It is odd," she said. "They are neighbors of ours in Leicestershire. There was a branch of the family which came out to this country in the eighteenth century. It must have belonged to them."

"Very likely," said Wharton. He stood a moment in silence. He was thinking.

Then he looked at her sharply, and she dropped her eyes. "Don't you want to come out and see my garden?" he asked. "There is not much left of it so late in the autumn, but my intentions have been good. Formal gardening is one of my fads."

"I should like to see it," she answered.

He opened the French window, and they stepped out on the terrace.

"It is odd," he said, "that we should have a tea-service with the coat-of-arms of one of your neighbors upon it."

"Yes," she said; "it almost makes me believe in ghosts, in spite of what I said the other day." She turned her eyes away, as if she would have recalled the words.

"I was thinking of that, too," he answered. "Sometimes I think I do believe in them," he went on. "Such strange things happen—such strange coincidences. And there must be happy ghosts—the ghosts that manage unexpected meetings of old friends, and make us cling to our faith in romance."

"I never thought of that," she said. "I'm afraid I'm not very romantic. Life upsets the story-books."

"As a rule," he answered; "but every now and then life arranges some strange true story which no story-book writer would dare to use."

She shook her head. "Perhaps," she said; "but it's best to try to be content with facts."

"For a queen of the hunt," said Wharton, "you are a deep philosopher."

"Hunting," she answered, "is something besides sport. It fills one's lungs with fresh air and keeps one's ideas sensible. And even if one loses the hounds, one loses other things as well."

Wharton nodded. "But perhaps," he said, "some day you will agree with me." He slipped his hand into his breast pocket and took the letter in his fingers. "Suppose—" he said; then he hesitated and stopped.

She looked at him wonderingly.

"Suppose—" he repeated.

He stopped the second time as Elinora

appeared around the house, galloping upon Bub's broomstick, followed by John on his own favorite, and by Bub, who brought up the rear. All were screaming loudly.

"I won!" shouted Elinora. "I beat John! John fell down at the ditch!"

"I should say he did," observed Wharton. "He's a sight."

John's hands and knees were covered with clay, and his shoes were incased in it.

"Are these the children who were in the road that day?" asked Miss Melville.

"Yes," said Wharton. "Just now everything is hunting and steeplechasing."

Miss Melville smiled. "Have you been having a race?" she asked Elinora.

"It's the Echo Hunt Steeplechase Handicap," said Elinora, proudly.

"She does n't know what a handicap is," whispered Wharton, "but it sounds well."

Miss Melville paid no attention to him, but spoke again to Elinora.

"That's very fine," she said. "What are you riding?"

"The Lamb," replied Elinora. "It's Bub's; but Shamrock has real legs, and I can't ride him fast."

"I see," said Miss Melville. "The Lamb was a great horse. He won the Grand National twice."

"Oh, yes," said Elinora; "we know that."

"Of course," said Miss Melville, gravely. "What is your brother riding? It's too bad he came down."

"Whirlwind," said John.

"Whirlwind?" repeated Miss Melville. She looked at Wharton curiously.

"Well?" he said. But he knew what was in her mind.

She made no answer.

"He fell in the mud," said John, "or I'd have won. And I had a bit of a stake on him, too."

Wharton smiled at his son, and the words of the man in the phaëton came back to him.

"So you had a bit on Whirlwind?" he said. "What is a bit, John?"

"Why," said John, "you must n't bet

more than you can afford; but it 's all right to risk a bit, you know."

His manner and intonation were so like the Englishman's that Wharton laughed.

"That 's so," he said.

At that moment the fox-terrier looked around the corner of the house.

"There 's Blink," said John. They turned toward the dog, and Blink hastily retired, with the three after him.

"I don't think," said Wharton, "that Blink appreciates being one of the hounds."

Miss Melville smiled. "They 've left their horses," she said. "I once knew a steeplechase horse named Whirlwind."

"Really?" said Wharton.

He happened to look toward the house and saw Henderson coming out of the French window.

"I fancy I 'm wanted," he said.

The man approached.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Henderson. He held out a telegram which had been opened.

"The negro man who left the packages

just now came back with this. He said he found it on the floor of the cottage, sir."

Wharton took the telegram and Henderson left.

"I don't see why he should bring this to me," he said. He drew out the despatch. It was a cable from England. There were four words: "Whirlwind fell at water."

"I beg your pardon," said Wharton to Miss Melville. He stuffed the despatch into his breeches pocket. "Shall we go in?" he asked.

"I think we had better," she answered.

He opened the window, and she passed in. As he followed, his eyes fell on the tea-service.

"That's the bit on Whirlwind," he said to himself.

Miss Melville was speaking to Mrs. Wharton, who was still at the tea-table.

Wharton looked at the girl and thought.

Just then Wheelwright came up. "Have you given her the letter?" he asked Wharton.

"No," said Wharton, "not yet. I want to get hold of that chap," he went on. "I think that would be the best way. We must find out where he's gone, and wire him. Perhaps, though," he added doubtfully, "I ought to give her the letter first."

There was a cracking of whips outside in the driveway on the other side of the house, and the sound of the whippers-in shouting at straggling hounds. Miss Melville turned.

"The hounds are starting," she said.

As she spoke, the setter pup, the beagle, and Blink the fox-terrier passed unwillingly across the terrace, dragged by John and Elinora. Bub brought up the rear, flourishing a broken buggy-whip. She stepped into the window.

"Good sport, Echo Hunt!" she called. "Have a good day! Have a great many good days!" she murmured. She turned back into the room. "I suppose we'd better mount," she added to Wharton.

"Yes," said Wharton. "I think we had."

She said "Good-by" to Mrs. Wharton. The people were streaming out to see the hounds, and she followed.

Wharton hung back a few steps. He took the letter from his pocket. "What do you think?" he asked Wheelwright. "Had I better give it to her, or shall we find him?"

"I met his negro servant a few minutes ago, when I went to the stables," said Wheelwright.

"Did you find out where he has gone?" asked Wharton.

Wheelwright dropped his voice. "He's dead," he said.

Wharton was silent. He looked at Wheelwright with a question in his eyes.

Wheelwright nodded.

They were at the door, and Miss Melville was waiting.

"Here is Lady Gay," she said. "I ought to have a good day on that mare."

"She'll carry you well," said Wharton. He slipped the letter into his pocket. "Yes," he added, "we ought to have a good day."

THE REGGIE LIVINGSTONES'
COUNTRY LIFE

VII

THE REGGIE LIVINGSTONES' COUNTRY LIFE

MRS. INNIS joined Mrs. Courtlandt Dashwood on the veranda of the club-house.

"I 've just had a letter from dear Rosina," said Mrs. Innis. She had the letter in her hand, and began to take it out of the envelop.

"Who is 'dear Rosina'?" asked Mrs. Dashwood.

"Why, you remember Rosina Russell?" said Mrs. Innis, in a tone of mild reproof.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Dashwood; "she was that Boston girl who married Reggie Livingstone. What's the matter with her?"

"She will do so much for our life here,"

replied Mrs. Innis. "You know, my dear, we *do* get narrow and material, and, I am afraid, rather stably; and she has a beautiful mind, and fine sympathies for art and poetry. I stopped with them in Rome, and saw all the old things they had collected. She is very Preraphaelite."

"Well," said Mrs. Dashwood, "is she coming here?"

"That is just the thing she writes about," Mrs. Innis replied. She unfolded the letter and began to read:

"We are tired of wandering, even though our path has been through the treasure-houses of the past. I suspect that Reginald is anxious to see his friends again, and I cannot but believe that it is best at once to begin our life in America. I consider it very important that we should begin that life under conditions of calm and sweetness. Reginald, of course, has always lived in New York, but I cannot look forward to the unwholesome, feverish, yes, wicked life which goes on there. I know that it is best for us to find some peaceful spot in some beautiful country-side, with a few agreeable people near by, and there to build a house and settle down. I write to ask you about Oakdale, because, from what I know of it, the place seems suitable. Reginald is fond of out-of-

door sports, and I truly love horses, though I do not know much about them."

Mrs. Innis paused because Mrs. Dashwood had rushed down upon the lawn. She noticed that Lobster, her white bull-terrier, was behind an ornamental shrub killing the club's Persian cat. She returned presently with Lobster on a leading-string, and Mrs. Innis continued:

"Moreover, there are several of Reginald's old friends living there, though perhaps it would be as well if we should lose sight of some of them."

"I suppose she means Courty," observed Mrs. Dashwood.

Mrs. Innis made no comment, but read on:

"And yet this is perhaps a selfish view to take of the matter. Reginald's influence would doubtless be felt, and his taste for the higher things would be communicated to the companions of his idle bachelor days—days which I know he deeply regrets."

"His nose is badly scratched," observed Mrs. Dashwood, who had been examining

Lobster's wounds. "The nasty cat! I ought to take him home to put something on it."

"But don't you think they would be a great addition?" said Mrs. Innis.

"I dare say," said Mrs. Dashwood. "I wonder if Reggie is much changed. You poor dear!" she remarked to Lobster, "I wish I had let you finish it." She rose as she spoke, and ordered her horses.

Mrs. Innis went into the women's room and wrote twelve pages to Mrs. Reginald Livingstone in Florence.

THE following autumn, somewhat as a consequence of this correspondence, the Reggie Livingstones were installed in Mr. Carteret Carteret's house, one mile from the club. He was intending to hunt in England that season, and the Livingstones were glad to take his house because they were still warring with the architect about plans. In addition to a building-site near the club, they had purchased the small farm that lay behind. Mrs. Livingstone considered the tilling of the soil and the

companionship, as she expressed it, of sweet-breathing Alderney cows to be a source of inspiration and beautiful thoughts. In fact, during the voyage across the Atlantic, when she was bored with the sea, and while stopping at a New York hotel, when she was bored by the town bustle, country life had become a passion. She could hardly wait to enter upon it, and she passed much of her time drawing pencil sketches of walled gardens and hen-houses with Romanesque pilasters.

One evening, a fortnight after the Livingstones' installation in the country, and after the community had reassembled for the October hunting, Mrs. Livingstone was in her drawing-room, surrounded by the guests who were sitting through the after-dinner period of a woman's dinner-party. Livingstone's men friends were giving him a dinner of welcome at the club, and it had occurred to Mrs. Livingstone to ask their wives and a few others to dine with her.

"I'm so glad you like us," Mrs. Innis was saying, "because, you know, in a cer-

tain sense I feel responsible for bringing you here."

"You are all delightful, dear!" replied Mrs. Livingstone, soulfully, "and the country is beautiful beyond words. I am also very much pleased with this little place of Mr. Carteret's. The dear flowers are simply charming." She turned to Mrs. Dashwood, who appeared either to be bored or very sleepy. "Don't you think so?"

"I think," said Mrs. Dashwood, "that a garden is a bore. When the sun or the frost is n't killing everything, the dogs are, or somebody's horses get into it. It is much better to get your flowers from town by express four times a week."

Mrs. Livingstone's countenance showed that she dissented from this view. However, she had a theory about mastering persons by discovering their nobler interests, so that she continued the discussion.

"If you don't care about watching the growth and development of flowers," she said, "perhaps you would be interested in vegetables. The vegetable-garden here is remarkable."

"It is the same with vegetables as with flowers," said Mrs. Dashwood. "They raise them better and cheaper in New Jersey."

"But," protested Mrs. Livingstone, "think of the sentiment and poetry which attach to the fruits of one's own garden. Was it not Horace who wrote an ode to the white turnips raised by Lucullus?"

"How delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Innis.

"I do not care for turnips," said Mrs. Dashwood. "I believe, however, that they are very wholesome for sheep."

Mrs. Livingstone turned from Mrs. Dashwood to Mrs. Innis. "You and I will garden together, dear."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Innis.

At this not only Mrs. Dashwood but others smiled. Mrs. Innis was remarkable for never doing any of those things, except in imagination.

There was a pause in the conversation.

"Well," observed Mrs. Dashwood, loudly, "are n't we going to play

bridge?" She had been waiting half an hour for the tables to be brought in.

Mrs. Livingstone made no reply. She seemed not to have heard, though that was scarcely possible. She smiled faintly with what she considered her "sweet expression."

"Yes," she said dreamily to Mrs. Innis, "you and I will have a garden with jonquils and lilies and fritillaria and rosemary and all the delightful old flowers—"

"What is fritillaria?" Mrs. Varick inquired.

"Why, don't you know?" said Mrs. Livingstone. "It is that lovely—" she hesitated, as if seeking the descriptive words.

"Are n't we going to play bridge?" asked Mrs. Dashwood.

Mrs. Livingstone abandoned her search after the descriptive words.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Dashwood," she said coldly, "but I believe that there are no cards in the house. Neither Mr. Livingstone nor myself ever plays. We have ideals which forbid it. While not assuming

to criticize others, I must say that I disapprove of playing any game for stakes, however small."

Mrs. Innis's skill at bridge was noteworthy, and her winnings were almost scandalous, but her sympathies were catholic and quick.

"I admire you very much for saying that," she said. "I am sure we play too much, and need just such an influence as yours."

"Of course," said Mrs. Dashwood, "I believe in people living up to their principles, if they have any."

Mrs. Livingstone did not exactly understand what Mrs. Dashwood meant. "I am glad you agree with me," she said. She considered that a safe remark.

Mrs. Dashwood began to play with the fox-terrier, and made no reply.

"We were talking about gardening and country life," Mrs. Livingstone continued, addressing the company through Mrs. Innis. "Don't you think that a beautiful environment such as we have here must make our lives finer and more beautiful?"

"It must, of course," said Mrs. Innis. "And you remember you promised to have a class and to let us come and be taught about books and art."

Mrs. Livingstone looked down meekly.

"I should be a very poor teacher," she said, "I know so little; but we could study together."

"You know a great deal," said Mrs. Innis. "When shall we begin?"

Mrs. Livingstone thought for a moment. "Wednesdays at ten would suit me best, if it is agreeable to you."

There was no dissent.

"Wednesday suits every one," said Mrs. Innis. "We will begin day after to-morrow. As I've said before, it will make our life so much more profitable and amusing."

Mrs. Livingstone looked doubtful at the last word. She had something in mind to say, however, and she let Mrs. Innis's rather extraordinary point of view pass.

"There is just one thing regarding this place," she began, "about which I am in doubt; that is the hunting. It is certainly

a question whether such strong excitement is a good thing, to say nothing of the risks which accompany it. Ought a married man to assume those risks merely in the course of his pleasure, and ought a wife—to be more explicit, ought I to allow Mr. Livingstone to take them?”

There was no answer to this question, which was addressed generally.

Mrs. Livingstone turned to Mrs. Innis.

“Would you let him hunt if he were yours?”

“That is a very hard question,” replied Mrs. Innis. “In the first place, you see, I can’t imagine him being mine.” She blushed, and several of her friends smiled; but Mrs. Livingstone did not notice either the blush or the smiles. “In the second place,” Mrs. Innis continued, “when poor dear Mr. Innis was alive, I tried never to allow myself a wish of my own.” She sighed, and the friends who had smiled before smiled again.

“That was unselfish of you,” said Mrs. Livingstone, “but quite wrong, I am sure, if your wishes were for his good.”

She turned to Mrs. Dashwood.

"What would you do," she asked, "about Reggie's hunting?"

"I should n't do anything," replied Mrs. Dashwood, still playing with the terrier. "It would n't do any good. I've found out that when Courtlandt wishes to hunt or drink or gamble, he does it without consulting me."

"Mr. Livingstone," said his wife, coldly, "neither drinks nor gambles, so that it is unnecessary to consider those subjects. As to hunting, I believe that he would give it up if I asked it."

"He might," said Mrs. Dashwood, "if he was n't keen about it, or if you cut down his allowance."

"I think," replied Mrs. Livingstone, with reproof in her tone, "that you are seriously in error. A woman should, as they say, manage her husband only by appealing to his strength and manliness, by sharing and sympathizing with his interests."

"You are quite right, my dear," said Mrs. Innis. "Don't let her make you

worldly or lose your faith in men. After all," she added, with a shrug of her shoulders, "there is no one else to marry us, is there?"

"I am sure that I am right," said Mrs. Livingstone. "Community of interest is what makes marriage happy. That is why we have come to the country. We both are wrapped up in country life. It is a very wholesome taste to have in common. Town life is full of temptations, but here in the country it is quite different."

"Yes," said Mrs. Dashwood, "different and worse."

"I am afraid, my dear Mrs. Dashwood," said Mrs. Livingstone, "that you are something of a pessimist."

"No," said Mrs. Dashwood; "only I've lived here ten years. But I would n't live anywhere else," she added. "I like to ride to hounds."

Mrs. Livingstone looked puzzled. She started to speak, but Mrs. Dashwood interrupted by asking if she might have her horses ordered.

"But you are not going alone?" she

said. "Is n't Mr. Dashwood coming for you?"

"I hope not," said Mrs. Dashwood; "not at this time of night."

Mrs. Livingstone recoiled in shocked amazement.

"You must n't pay any attention to Effie," said Mrs. Innis, soothingly. "It is her pose to be cynical. The real reason why she is going home without Mr. Dashwood is that she has me on her hands, and the brougham holds only two."

"But are you all going?" exclaimed Mrs. Livingstone, as her guests rose. "Are n't any of you going to wait till the dinner at the club is over?"

"My dear," said Mrs. Varick, "they won't be leaving the club for hours. It is much more sensible for us to go to bed than to sit up and wait. You had better do the same thing."

As the last of her guests drove away, Mrs. Livingstone slipped out and stood on the steps in the porte-cochère. The crunching of the wheels on the gravel ceased. She waited for a time, listening

for an approaching vehicle, but none came. She was very tired, and presently she went in and went to bed. But she did not go to sleep for a long time. New and disturbing doubts worried her.

At eleven o'clock the next morning Mr. Livingstone had shown no signs of getting up. His door was locked, and when his man knocked at nine, the only response was a mumbled something which he did not understand, but interpreted as a request to be left undisturbed. Mrs. Livingstone was growing uneasy. Her husband always rose at nine, and not unnaturally she feared that he was ill. She was wondering whether she ought to send for the doctor, when the footman appeared and informed her that some one was at the door with a horse and wished to speak to Mr. Livingstone.

She went to the door, and found a groom in the porte-cochère with a horse.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"Please, madam," said the groom, "Mr. Galloway told me to deliver this horse to Mr. Livingstone and to give him this note."

"You may give me the note," she said, "and you had better take the horse to the stable."

She glanced at the handwriting, which was unfamiliar, and went into the house and listened. There were no sounds of Mr. Livingstone's awakening.

"It may be something important," she said half aloud. "I suppose I *ought* to open it." She hesitated for a moment, then she tore open the envelop.

"DEAR REGGIE [she read]: Here is old Blue Chip, who stands you for one stack of the same, as per last evening's sale. I hope you feel better than I do. *Galloway.*"

She looked perplexed. She began to read the note a second time, when she heard a bell ring and immediately afterward the sound of the unlocking of a door. It was a wooden house, and people moving and speaking in the upper story could be heard from below. Presently she heard a servant knock and her husband order a bottle of mineral water.

"Do you wish your breakfast in your room, sir?" asked the man.

"I don't wish any breakfast," replied Mr. Livingstone. "Is there any grapefruit in the house?"

"I 'll see, sir," said the man.

"If there is none," said Mr. Livingstone, "bring some lemons with the water, and bring a quart bottle."

Mrs. Livingstone listened with growing anxiety. Her husband rarely ate grapefruit, and invariably did eat a hearty breakfast. Moreover, his voice was hoarse. "Reggie," she called up, "are you ill?"

"No," replied Mr. Livingstone.

"You are very hoarse," she commented. "You must have caught cold coming home."

"I did," said Mr. Livingstone.

"You know, I told you to take a muffler."

There was no answer.

"Don't you feel well?" she inquired.

"I feel like a little skylark," he replied hoarsely.

"I'm so glad," she said sympathetically. "Reggie," she continued, mounting the stairs, "a horse came for you a little while

ago—and a note. You were asleep, and it looked like something important, so I opened it.”

“A horse?” he said, with a note of surprise in his voice. “Let’s see the note.”

She handed him the envelop, and he took out the sheet of paper and read it.

“This is some idiot joke of Galloway’s,” he observed.

“What does he mean?” asked Mrs. Livingstone.

“Blue Chip is the name of a horse,” he replied.

“And I suppose the ‘one stack’ refers to the haystack which it will eat up,” she suggested.

“You are a wonderful woman!” replied Mr. Livingstone. He patted her shoulder. “Run away, and let me get my bath.”

“But is this the horse you were going to get for me?” she asked.

“Of course,” he answered, and disappeared into his bedroom.

Mrs. Livingstone went down-stairs with the intention of going to the stables to inspect her new horse. She put on a hat

and stepped through the door, when she saw two men coming up the drive, one pulling and the other pushing what is known as a breaking-cart. She waited till they approached, for she noticed that one of the shafts was broken and that the brass dash-rail was bent out of shape. Moreover, several spokes were missing from one of the wheels.

"Has there been an accident?" she asked anxiously. She glanced fearfully out toward the road, expecting to see a motionless form borne in.

"No, ma'am," answered the man in the shafts; "that is, not recent." He took a note from his pocket. "This is for Mr. Livingstone," he said.

"You may give it to me," she replied. The man handed her the note, and she turned to enter the house.

"Shall we take it to the stable?" the man called after her.

"Take what to the stable?" she said, stopping.

"Why, the cart, ma'am," said the man.

"Is *that* cart for Mr. Livingstone?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am," answered the man.

"Very well," she said. "Take it to the stable."

She went in and mounted the stairs.

"Reginald," she called, "here is another note for you, and there is a broken cart outside that two men have just taken to the stable."

One half of Mr. Livingstone's face was still unshaven and lathered, but he came to the door with an anxious look, and took the note.

"Good heavens, Rosina!" he exclaimed, "can't you keep these things till I get dressed? I have a headache, and very likely a temperature."

"You said you felt like a lark," observed Mrs. Livingstone.

"Well, don't argue about it," he replied. He tore open the envelop, and read the contents aloud. It said:

"Here is the breaking, or broken, cart that went for the odd reds. I forgot to send it over with Blue Chip. By the way, this is the best way

to drive the old horse—about half an hour ahead of the trap. It saves repairs.

“*Galloway.*”

“Is this another of Mr. Galloway’s jokes?” asked Mrs. Livingstone.

“Hang Galloway!” said Mr. Livingstone. “He ought to be more considerate so early in the morning.”

“Please don’t swear,” said Mrs. Livingstone. “It distresses me; and, besides, it is n’t early in the morning.”

“Angel,” said Mr. Livingstone, desperately, “please let me shave.” And he withdrew.

“But I don’t understand about the ‘odd reds,’” she called after him, “unless it means the odd spokes that were left in the wheels. They were red.”

“That’s it,” he called back, and shut the door of his dressing-room.

Mrs. Livingstone was curious to inspect her new horse. Mr. Galloway’s second note was not reassuring, and when she had said that she loved horses she meant safe, trustworthy horses with kind eyes and indolent temperaments. If it were

safest to put Blue Chip half an hour ahead of the trap, she wished to make no experiments at closer range. She decided to consult Barnes, the coachman.

As she was leaving the house she chanced to look toward the gateway, and a spectacle met her eyes which put Blue Chip out of her mind. It was a procession coming up the driveway toward the front door. First there was a man driving a wheelless board platform, known in the country as a stone-boat. There was an old plow on the stone-boat; also a small black pig, which was tied to the plow. Next there was a stable-boy with a calf; after him a groom with a hugely fat pie-bald pony. The groom also led a goat. Behind him came another groom riding a horse that limped in various legs. All four were bandaged, so that the exact nature of the infirmity was not obvious. Next came a farm-wagon loaded with what might be called an assorted cargo. Her eye caught two sheep, a harrow, a coop of chickens, and some distended grain-sacks.

As the head of the line approached, Mrs. Livingstone advanced to meet it. "What is all this?" she inquired of the farm-hand on the stone-boat.

"I was told to leave some things for Mr. Livingstone, ma'am," replied the man. "There 's a plow, and a shote, and the stone-boat." He handed her a note.

"Well," she said, "and all the rest of you? What do you want?"

The old farmer on the seat of the box-wagon replied:

"I got a load of stuff from Mr. Colfax's place fer Mr. Livingstone, and I guess the rest of these fellers has stuff fer him, too. Besides them sheep and the harrer," he continued, casting his eye over the wagon, "I got a coop of games, a coyote pup, four beagle-dogs, one bag of clover-seed, two bushels of early rose seed-potatoes, and one bag of prepared trout food. It 's all in this here invitory." He handed down a note to the groom on the lame horse, and he passed it along to the groom with the pony and the goat, and eventually it reached Mrs. Livingstone, together with

other notes that came from the various other persons in the line.

"Where shall I leave your stuff, miss?" inquired the farmer.

Mrs. Livingstone looked up blankly from the collection of notes in her hand.

"Please wait," she said, "till I speak with Mr. Livingstone." She went indoors and up-stairs to her husband's room. There was no answer to her knock, and she went in. Then she heard a splashing in his bath-room. "Reginald!" she called.

The splashing ceased.

"Reginald!" she called again.

"I 'm in the tub!" came the reply.

"But there is a procession waiting outside, and here are a lot more notes."

"A lot more what?" said the voice in the bath-room.

"Notes," she repeated. "Letters from people who have sent you things."

"Oh, bother!" said the voice. Presently the door was unlocked and a wet arm extended.

"Give me the notes," said Mr. Livingstone. Then the door closed again. "I

shall be down in a few minutes," he added.
"Tell them to wait."

Mrs. Livingstone told the men to wait, and then she went into the library and sat down. She was troubled—she could not explain why. There was something irregular about the way the day had begun. She thought it best to calm her mind, and she took from the table a book of verses by a Bulgarian poetess and began to read. There was little which seemed to mean anything in the verses, but they sounded well, and she decided to read them to the class next day. They were much out of the common, and that is a great deal with poetry, even if it means nothing. She was reading in a low tone to herself:

"‘My heart, the fragrance of the rose,
The lark’s song, and the passion of yesterday—’

"How beautiful!" she murmured, "how true!" She closed the book with her finger at the page, and gazed tenderly across at a Braun photograph on the opposite wall depicting a Botticelli young lady with a

scrawny neck. As her eyes returned to the book, her range of vision embraced the bow-window which looked out upon the tennis lawn and the garden. She gave a little scream and clasped the book to her bosom. She saw two horses side by side in the air entering the garden over the wall and high box hedge and about to land on the violet-frames. The sound of breaking glass which instantly followed told her that they had landed. The riders, whom she recognized as Messrs. Dashwood and Colfax, immediately dismounted and began examining their horses' legs. The examination seemed satisfactory, for they presently remounted, without casting a glance at the frames. When they galloped on to the tennis lawn, Mrs. Livingstone threw the Bulgarian poetess on the table and dashed to the window. She could see the deep hoof-prints in the tender turf. The French windows were partly open, and she was about to request them to keep off the tennis lawn when she heard her husband calling from the window above.

“Hello, you chaps!” he shouted.

His hail was answered by Mr. Dashwood:

"What do you mean by putting glass on the landing side of a hedge?"

Mrs. Livingstone gasped.

"I did n't put it there," replied Mr. Livingstone, "but I wish I had. Tomorrow I shall fix it up with barbed wire."

"You will be put out of the hunt if you do," said Mr. Dashwood.

"It was rather a good jump, don't you think?" observed Willie Colfax. "We got a tenner apiece out of Carty. He did n't think we 'd have it."

"Where is Carty?" asked Mr. Livingstone.

"He 's coming around by the gate," said Mr. Colfax. "He 's on a horse that 's just been taken up."

"He'll be annoyed about the way you've torn up the garden and the lawn."

"No, he won't," said Mr. Dashwood. "He said that you were a responsible tenant. He did n't care."

Mrs. Livingstone, listening in the library,

dropped into a chair. It was difficult for her to believe her ears.

"How do you feel this morning?" inquired Mr. Colfax.

"Ripping," replied Mr. Livingstone.

Mr. Dashwood looked up and smiled incredulously. "You were nosing in rather big last night," he observed. "I felt anxious about you."

"That was awfully good of you," said Mr. Livingstone. "How are you to-day?"

Mr. Dashwood gazed across the landscape, and absently lifted his hat and bared his head to the breeze.

"Have our things come?" he asked after a pause.

"They are on the other side of the house," said Mr. Livingstone. "I think it was low of you to sell me all those things, and lower yet to deliver them."

"They were no good to us," said Mr. Colfax.

"Go around and send your horses to the stable," said Mr. Livingstone. "I'm coming down."

Mrs. Livingstone got up from her chair in the library and left the room. Feelings of surprise and indignation were mastering her.

As Mr. Livingstone came down-stairs, he met his wife in the hallway. "What is the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing," she replied in a tone that meant quite the reverse.

"Are n't you going to look at our new possessions?" he suggested.

"I don't think I care for those men," said Mrs. Livingstone.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Livingstone, cheerfully. "What does it matter about a little broken glass?"

"It is n't the broken glass," said Mrs. Livingstone; "and please don't say 'Nonsense.' It distresses me."

"Come along!" said her husband, and he led the way out into the porte-cochère. As she appeared behind him, Mr. Dashwood and Mr. Colfax both bowed with much manner and said, "Good morning, Mrs. Livingstone."

Mr. Carteret, who rode up at that mo-

ment, also bowed and said, " Good morning."

Mrs. Livingstone returned their salutes with one dignified inclination of her head.

" It is a very lovely morning," continued Mr. Dashwood. " Beautiful color on the hills, and all that sort of thing."

" Yes," said Mrs. Livingstone; " it is almost a profanation to do anything on such a morning except to admire the view, is it not? "

" You are quite right," replied Mr. Dashwood. " Mrs. Dashwood enjoyed your party very much last evening."

" I am glad that Mrs. Dashwood enjoyed herself," said Mrs. Livingstone.

There was an uncomfortable pause, which was broken by Mr. Colfax. " There is Effie now, with Mrs. Innis," he said. He waved his hat, and Mrs. Dashwood, who was driving along the road in a cart, turned into the Livingstones' driveway. As she saw the array of things marshaled before the front door and the company assembled there, an uncharitable gleam lighted her very handsome eyes.

"Good morning," said Mrs. Dashwood as she drove up. There was a cordiality in her tone which jarred on Mrs. Livingstone's feminine intuitions.

"Good morning, dear," said Mrs. Innis. "We saw Willie wave to us, and we drove in to say what a good time we had last evening."

"Won't you send your cart to the stable?" said Mrs. Livingstone.

"Thank you, no; we can stop only a minute," said Mrs. Dashwood.

"My dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Innis, "what does *all this* mean?" She motioned toward the procession, which she seemed to have just noticed. "Have you been to an auction?"

"I really don't know what it does mean," said Mrs. Livingstone, stiffly. "I was about to inquire."

Mr. Dashwood and Mr. Colfax grinned, and Mr. Livingstone looked dignified and uncomfortable. Mr. Carteret preserved his usual uninquisitive calm.

"What have *you* been doing?" said Mrs. Dashwood to her husband.

"Nothing," said Mr. Dashwood.

"We jumped the garden hedge," said Mr. Colfax. "It was rather profitable." He looked at Mr. Carteret.

"Yes," said Mr. Livingstone, "and landed in Mrs. Livingstone's violet-frames."

Mrs. Livingstone cast a side glance at Mrs. Dashwood and tried to stop her husband.

"It was of no consequence," she said.

"Courtlandt, you ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Mrs. Dashwood. "But I told you how it would be with a garden," she continued to Mrs. Livingstone. "It is much better to get your flowers from town."

Mrs. Livingstone made no reply.

"But I want to know about these things," said Mrs. Innis, who was studying the procession.

"These are some treasures which Reggie acquired last evening," replied Mr. Colfax. "You know, Reggie is going in for country life. Rather a fine lot, are n't they?"

"No," said Mrs. Innis; "it looks to me like trash."

"How can you say such things?" said Mr. Colfax. "Look at that horse!"

"He's lame in only two legs," observed Mr. Carteret.

"Well, that was Courty's horse," said Mr. Colfax.

"Was that pony yours?" asked Mrs. Innis.

"No," said Mr. Colfax; "that was Varick's. I must say, it was hardly right to unload that on Reggie. Besides having the heaves, it bites. It nearly took his four-year-old's hand off. It is n't a safe pony for children."

"So I suppose he thought Mr. Livingstone would enjoy riding him," said Mrs. Livingstone.

"There is also another way of looking at it," said Mr. Colfax, cheerfully. "When you go in for country life, you ought to take the bitter with the sweet. A bad pony about the place adds a spice to things."

"Really?" said Mrs. Livingstone. She was holding herself together with deter-

mination. The broken violet-frames, the ruined tennis lawn were easier to bear than Mrs. Dashwood.

"But which are your things?" Mrs. Innis asked of Mr. Colfax.

"Mine," he answered, "are that superior lot in the box-wagon."

She beckoned to Mr. Carteret.

"What is in the wagon?" she asked.

He moved his horse to the side of the wagon.

"There are two sheep," he began.

"They have the foot-rot," said Mrs. Dashwood.

"Would you expect me to draft the sound ones?" asked Mr. Colfax.

"A coop of game chickens," Mr. Carteret continued.

"They won't stand," said Mr. Dashwood.

"A broken harrow," Mr. Carteret went on, "the coyote that killed Mrs. Carstair's peacocks, and two couples of beagles that are down on their feet. They also look as if they had mange."

"They have," said Mr. Colfax.

"What is in these sacks?" inquired Mr. Carteret.

"Clover-seed, potatoes, and trout food," replied Mr. Colfax.

"The trout food, I presume," said Mr. Carteret, "is three years old, dating from the time when you were going to stock your pond, but left the cans of young fish at the station."

"That is true," said Mr. Colfax.

"What is the matter with the clover-seed and potatoes?" Mr. Carteret looked up at the farmer on the box as he spoke.

The old man chuckled.

"It hain't my business to say, Mr. Carteret," he replied.

"This seems to be all, Mrs. Innis," said Mr. Carteret.

"Well," said Mrs. Innis, "if the other things are like these, you all ought to be ashamed of yourselves. The idea of giving a lot of rubbish to an old friend who has just come here to live!"

"*Give!*" exclaimed Mr. Colfax, indignantly. "Who said anything about *giving* these things?"

"Do you mean to say you sold them?" said Mrs. Innis.

"Well, it's the same thing; Reggie won them from us at poker."

"At cards?" exclaimed Mrs. Livingstone. She looked at her husband in horror.

"At cards?" repeated Mrs. Dashwood, with polite surprise in her tone. "I think we had better be going." She said this to Mrs. Innis, but Mrs. Livingstone heard.

At that moment the coyote, who had been innocently gnawing his rope, found himself unattached and charged the coop of game chickens. A wild clamor and cackling ensued. The farmer turned back into the wagon with his whip; the coyote jumped out and ran between the legs of the lame horse. As the horse winded the wolf, he gave a snort and dashed across the flower-beds, leaving the groom on his back in a bed of China asters.

The coyote hurried off on another line through the vegetable-garden, pursued by the beagles, which had also escaped and were yapping cheerily.

"Keep them off the flower-beds!" called Mrs. Livingstone.

"We 'll have a run!" cried Mr. Colfax. "Tally-ho! Gone away!" he bawled, and jumped on his horse.

Mr. Dashwood also mounted. "Forward on!" he yelled, and the two galloped after the beagles.

"They 've gone through the vegetables!" cried Mrs. Livingstone.

"They will have a good gallop," said Mr. Carteret, wistfully. "I wish I was n't on a horse just off grass."

"But the flowers and the vegetables!" wailed Mrs. Livingstone.

"Never mind, dear," said Mrs. Dashwood; "you can get better ones by express from town. You know I told you how it would be. Good-by; we are going to follow on the road." She whipped up, and went down the drive at a gallop.

"Good-by, dear!" called back Mrs. Innis.

The piebald pony had become roused by the excitement and began bucking. He ended, however, by biting the stable-

boy. The boy put his hand to his injured shoulder, and both pony and goat got away.

"Look! Look! The pony!" cried Mrs. Livingstone. "Look! It's in the geraniums!"

"Hang the geraniums, and the pony too!" said Mr. Livingstone.

"Don't say that!" cried his wife. "It distresses me. Stop the pony!"

"I say," called Mr. Livingstone, "can't some of you catch that pony?"

The stable-boy started after it through the geraniums, and the pony fled to a more distant bed of asters.

Mrs. Livingstone stood white and rigid in the doorway, regarding these events. Suddenly she turned wildly upon Mr. Carteret.

"Take them all away! You must take them!" she commanded.

"Take what?" said Mr. Carteret, startled by her abruptness.

"All these things. They are the fruits of gambling, and they have ruined the lawn."

"But, my dear Mrs. Livingstone," Mr. Carteret began. Then he stopped. Hysterical women disturbed him, and even the remote possibility of possessing a horse like that which had broken loose made matters worse.

"You must take them!" she exclaimed. "They have ruined the garden; they have trampled on the flowers—"

"But the gardeners in a few days—" he interrupted.

"But *we* can't keep them," she said excitedly. "Don't you see? You must take them. *We* have ideals."

"Oh," said Mr. Carteret, as if that explained matters; "but, don't you see, I can't take them: I'm sailing for England."

"My dear," said Mr. Livingstone to his wife, "you are excited."

She gave him a glance, and turned to Mr. Carteret.

"If you can't take them yourself, then you must tell us how to dispose of them; we are your tenants."

To Mr. Carteret this was a new requirement in a landlord, but he saw that it

was useless to argue. An inspiration came to him. "There's the curate, you know, in the village. He's been used all his life to having things that other people don't want, and he's an awfully decent little chap." He started his horse down the driveway and lifted his cap. "Good morning," he called back. "I'm sorry I have to hurry off, but, you see, I'm sailing soon. The curate will be glad to have the calf," he added. He kicked his horse into a canter and fled.

"Take all these things to the curate," said Mrs. Livingstone to the men who remained in the line.

"But, Rosina," said Mr. Livingstone, "you can't send this stuff without some explanation."

"You may explain," said Mrs. Livingstone, and went into the house.

THAT afternoon the Livingstones' stablemen were busy delivering notes to the members of the class which announced that Mrs. Livingstone was indisposed and would be unable to have the class on

Wednesday. The next afternoon she took the train for town with Mr. Livingstone, and it shortly became known that they had taken a house in Boston for the winter. The farm and the building-site were offered for sale, and, with Mr. Carteret's permission, his house was relet to some rich people from the West who were anxious to get into the hunting set.

"I was afraid they would n't like it," observed Mrs. Innis. They were talking the matter over at tea on the club veranda. "But it is experiments like this that keep life interesting, is n't it?" she added.

"I 'm rather sorry for Reggie," said Mrs. Dashwood.

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